Carmen Andraș • Sonia D. Andraș

Trailblazers of the Press. American War Correspondents in Interwar Romania



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Contents

Introduction 5

1. *From Russia with Love.* The First Generation of American War Correspondents in Romania (1916 – Early 1930s) 32

The Impact of Balkanist Stereotypes and Socialist Propaganda on American War Correspondence 39

Conclusion 65

2. *Vestiges of the Old Order.* American Correspondents Reporting on Identity Negotiations in Transylvania 66

Danger Zones of Propaganda 74

Conclusion 91

3. *To All the Other Generally Anonymous. Often Persecuted:* Intercultural and International Negotiations 93

"A Society's Window onto the Battlefield" 95

Third-Class Ticket to a Vocation 97

"Sitting Up with a Dying City" 99

Bucharest, "Still Gay and Noisy" 103

Worries and Trepidations in Bucharest 109

The Miracle of Doftana: "A New Wave of Fratricide" 113

The Thirty-Six-Hour Bucharest Pogrom against the Jews 116

Conclusion 125

4. Journalist Hotels, or Spaces of Otherness 126

In Hitler's Shadow: Slices of Time in Luxurious Hotels 128

Distinct Places and Moments inside a Unique Social Space 137

The Athénée Palace through Times of War: Documenting the Past 145
Conclusion 147

5. *Amazons of the Press:* Women Journalists in Men's War 148
Innovators in the Realm of Photojournalism: Lee Miller and Margaret Bourke-White 168
Conclusion 183

6. Commensality beyond Politics: Cuisine, Flavors, and News 185
The Evolution of Modern Restaurants and Cafés 185
A Gourmet of the Press: John Gunther's Culinary Voyages 187
The Social Appetite. Places where Food, Memories and Identities Are Negotiated 193
What the American Correspondents Did Not See in Romania: Women, Diet and Hygiene 211
Gastropolitics. Included or Excluded from Cuisine 215
Conclusion 224

7. News and Coffee Sharing. Intellectual Mobility and Global Communication 226
Coffee, Culture, and Politics 226
The World of Yesterday and of Today 238
Allies or Enemies? 241
Secret Negotiations at the Café Louvre in Vienna 251
In the Capital of Intrigue 256
Conclusion 267

Final Remarks 268

Bibliography 273

Introduction

Trailblazers of the Press. American War Correspondents in Interwar Romania analyzes the portrayals of Romania shaped by the American war correspondents' who visited the country during the interwar era. These representations illustrate the cultural and identity negotiation process between the observers and the observed and among the many prevalent identities in this space. The historical and political analysis of America's stance towards Romania in the context of the world wars has been thoroughly addressed in both the American and Romanian academia. This book emphasizes the historical context of Romanian-American relationships and negotiations and the cultural, social, gender and identity dimensions reflected in the American correspondents' representations of significant historical events, especially from 1939 to 1940, when they arrived in Romania in considerable numbers. Therefore, the methodology implies an interdisciplinary approach to the subject, examined from multiple perspectives, including various domains such as international, social, cultural, and political history and cultural studies, together with travel, gender, identity and memory studies, and imagology.

The starting point for this research was a gift from a friend who gave us a copy of Robert St. John's *Foreign Correspondent*, which depicted the American war journalists' presence, challenges, and representations of interwar Romania, especially from their meeting space at the Athénée Palace Hotel. It demonstrated more complexity and richness of information than we anticipated. And then came the confirmation: the importance of this subject had been highlighted by historian and diplomat Ernest H. Latham, Jr. in his work "Byzantium's Last Blossom: Anglo-American Journalism in Bucharest, 1939–1941," which provided a thorough analysis

of the significance of American journalism related to Romania's crucial political events during the interwar period. Ernest H. Latham previously analyzed Countess Waldeck's visit to Romania, her political perspectives, and her social engagements at the Athénée Palace Hotel.

Interest in the research topic materialized through our involvement in the research project *The Ethos of Dialogue and Education: Romanian-American Cultural Negotiations (1920–1940)* and the publishing of several papers and chapters on the matter. This volume consolidates improved iterations of our contributions to the project, systematically arranged thematically to offer a more thorough and equitable depiction of American-Romanian cultural, identity, social, and political negotiations during the interwar period. It thus underscores the intricacy and temporal growth inherent in the depiction of war and interwar Romania by American war correspondents. Following the above-mentioned project, this book relies on the concept of cultural and identity negotiations, recently adopted in the field of cultural studies from economic and media studies. It capitalizes upon investigation that relates cultural studies concepts and methodologies to cultural, media, international, political, military, diplomatic and intellectual history. Based on this framework, *Trailblazers of the Press* examines the juxtapositions between difference/regularity, divergence/agreement, and conflict/concord within a space characterized by in-betweenness, intermediality, and transition, where negotiation can progress from divergence to dialogs and resolutions.

Negotiation may mediate ethnic, national, cultural, social, gender, religious, political, and ideological breaches in communication, provided there is a willingness to foster a better future. As a result of the above-mentioned research project, the book aims to revitalize a dynamic network for interaction, negotiations, cultural mobility, and exchange connecting Romania and the United States, which gained significant momentum after 1989. In such circumstances, elucidating the intricate interwar contacts

and negotiations proved paramount. The research integrates the concept of identity negotiations, often used in psychology to define the mechanisms of self- and mutual representation, as well as cultural and social communication. According to Stella Ting-Toomey, *Identity Negotiation Theory* defines identity as the various aspects of an individual's cultural, ethnic, religious, social class, gender, sexual orientation, professional, family/relational role, and personal image(s). These identities are developed through introspection and societal construction by being categorized by others. In the same context, negotiation refers to exchanging verbal and nonverbal signals between two or more communicators. This exchange supports, threatens, or enhances the various socio-cultural group-based or unique personal-based identity images or representations of the other in a specific situation.[1]

The book emphasizes particularly the significant activity of American foreign correspondents in interwar Romania, which offers an invaluable archive of historical, political, military, and diplomatic information on Romania, together with an engaging resource for cultural and social images. *Trailblazers of the Press* challenges the common belief about the irrelevant American influence in interwar Romania, providing significant evidence for a detailed imagological analysis of how America portrayed Romania. The book seeks to rectify the deficiency of information about foreign war correspondence, journals, and accounts of those who visited or resided in interwar Romania. It also highlights the crucial role that American female war journalists played in Romania, emphasizing their significant impact on the Allies' successes during World War II and, importantly, on Romania's international representation. The specified periods include substantial historical, cultural, and political events, highlighting the growing American engagement with Romania. This

[1] Stella Ting-Toomey, "Identity Negotiation Theory," in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Intercultural Competence*, ed. Janet Marie Bennett, vol. 1 (Los Angeles: Sage, 2015), 418–22.

effort underscores the importance of interwar Romanian-American relations, frequently misrepresented or neglected by pre-1989 Romanian scholarship. *Trailblazers of the Press* explores the complex role of American war correspondents in Romania, emphasizing the dynamic and multifaceted nature of interwar Romanian-American relations, requiring a comprehensive and adaptable approach to historical and cultural analysis.

Trailblazers of the Press embodies conceptual and methodological creativity via its comparative, multiperspectival, interdisciplinary, and international strategies, grounded in flexibility, communication, and the interrelations of cultures. It encompasses a flexible chronology primarily between two noteworthy events in Romanian history: 1920, when the Great Powers recognized the foundation of the Romanian national state, and 1940 when Romania transitioned to a National Legionary State and allied with the Axis Powers. The initial phase of "friendly" started as promising but declined with the rise of dictatorial and right-wing governments in Romania during the 1930s, ultimately leading to Romania aligning with Nazi Germany in 1940.

Trailblazers of the Press traces the complex trajectory of Romanian-American ties, influenced by political decisions, coalitions, and disagreements experienced by the American war correspondents in Romania. The evolution of relations, influenced by the United States' political and economic interests in the region, can clarify the power dynamics inherent in the Romanian-American dichotomy through a comparative analysis. Instead of rigid center-periphery power structures, where America is viewed as the ideological, political, or socioeconomic model to which Romania should conform, these concepts will be understood as compatible, adaptable, interchangeable, and dynamic. The analysis focuses on examples of identity and cultural negotiations between both countries during the American correspondents' documentation in Romania rather than unidirectional exchanges from the American core to the periphery of Eastern European

otherness. This approach highlights the importance of multicultural and multinational perspectives, transcending self-centered views. Its multidisciplinary methodology includes history (cultural, academic, socioeconomic, and political), cultural studies (gender, fashion, travel, memory, and identity studies), cultural anthropology, and imagology. The book examines how American war correspondents depict Romania, using concepts from cultural studies (negotiation, difference, diversity, discourse, power relations, representation) to redefine the fluid boundaries among various subject areas, identities, and cultures.

Trailblazers of the Press focuses on American war correspondence published in periodicals and books, emphasizing important references or whole book chapters devoted to Romania. The primary materials collected from American war correspondents' accounts related to Romania throughout the 20th century are divided into two categories. The first, referred to as the first generation of American observers, began during World War I and continued until the early 1930s. The Bolshevik Revolution was a primary focus of American reporters who came to Romania during this period, as most reached Romania via Russia. On the other hand, they very quickly started to see indications of authoritarianism and policies oriented toward extreme right-wing in Romania. The number of American correspondents in Romania substantially rose during the second generation, which lasted from early 1930 to late 1941, including the following years. Romania's strategic position, military affairs, diplomatic relations, economic conditions, and social realities became vital elements that drew the interest of American journalists. The protection of minority groups' rights became one of their essential tasks.[2]

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[2] See Carmen Andraș, "Crossing the Borders of Cultures: The First Wave of American War Correspondents in Romania and the Transylvanian Case (1916-Early 1930s)," in *Crossing Borders: Insights into the Cultural and Intellectual History of Transylvania (1848–1948)*, ed. Carmen Andraș and Cornel Sigmirean (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut & Gatineau, Canada, Symphologic Publishing, 2016), 199–232.

The primary sources begin with the first generation of American war correspondents, including Granville Fortescue, Stanley Washburn, John Reed, and Negley Farson. But the main focus of *Trailblazers of the Press* is on the second generation of American war correspondents who visited Romania in the 1930s and early 1940s, like Edward W. Beattie, Margaret Bourke-White, Sam Brewer, Ray Brock, Virginia Cowles, Walter Duranty, Karl Eskelund, Marcel William Fodor, Henry Tilton Gorrell, John Gunther, Lee Miller, Ray Moseley, Paul Scott Mowrer, Frank O'Brien, Robert Parker, John Reed, William L. Shirer, Robert St. John, Edmund Stevens, Leland Stowe, Ann Stringer, Cyrus Leo Sulzberger, Edmond Taylor, Dorothy Thompson, Sonia Tomara, Rosie G. Waldeck, Betty Wason, George Weller, Lee White.

They provided insightful analyses of the Romanian war situation, which were documented in multiple volumes. During the interwar era and World War II, numerous American correspondents from different media periodicals and organizations, including the *Chicago Daily News*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *United Press*, the *Associated Press*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *New York Post*, the *New York Times*, the *New York Herald Tribune*, the *Overseas News Agency*, CBS, News *Reuters*, the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* and *Newsweek*, were actively dispatching news on the European progress of war.

Besides their published articles and book chapters, we have included freshly released volumes from editors or families of the correspondents in our collection of primary sources. They provide a thorough database of American war journalism about Romania and offer astute assessments of the country's social, cultural, political, and military context, recorded in several volumes. Concurrently, further diaries and compilations of articles authored by American war correspondents have been released or are to be published, some of which pertain to Romania. These records are valuable for specialists in international and cultural history, diplomatic

and military history, cultural studies, and imagology. They exceed mere documentation and diplomatic, political, or military analyses by participating in direct identity dialogue and negotiation, whereby personal feelings, perceptions, and evaluations enhance the richness and dynamism of professional insights.

Various sources provide detailed insights into the role of American correspondents during the war. Apart from submitting reports to periodicals, American correspondents kept personal records in diaries and notebooks or sent letters discussing different events and situations without any initial intention of publicizing them. Several reports or drafts were later collected and published in books. Additional manuscripts have been preserved in either familial or public repositories. Apart from several experienced journalists, these American correspondents were young, in the initial stages of their careers, university graduates from diverse backgrounds, brimming with energy and enthusiasm, and committed professionals. They eagerly sought the latest information, prepared to report from even the most remote locations, and were willing to risk their lives while tracking military confrontations in war zones. It can be argued that they were diligent observers, meticulously corroborating and cross-referencing their news with multiple sources before transmitting the reports to their American publications.

Sir Geoffrey Cox, a foreign correspondent for British newspapers and a Rhodes Scholar from New Zealand, witnessed pivotal European events in the 1930s and 1940s.[3] While documenting the war in Europe,

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[3] When the Spanish Civil War started in 1936, Cox was sent to report on Madrid's valiant resistance. He authored a short book called *Defence of Madrid* (1937) based on his experiences there, and he was offered a position as a foreign correspondent for the *Daily Express*, first in Vienna and then Paris. He then covered the outbreak of the Second World War, the invasion threats in Holland during the winter of 1939–40, and the Russo–Finnish Winter War in Finland. After covering Belgium's invasion and France's collapse, he boarded the last passenger ship from Bordeaux in June 1940 and

he noted that many Americans, like himself, hailed from small, isolated towns and had felt disconnected from notable events. This situation created a powerful desire to become involved, which was a significant motivation for pursuing a career in daily journalism. Most hailed from remote, occasionally secluded regions in the United States and strongly desired to see other parts of the globe. Journalism emerged as the most effective and nearly exclusive method for conducting such investigations due to the high costs and challenges of travel. Scholarships, grants, and fellowships were scarce and highly competitive, and few commercial prospects were available.[4]

According to Ray Moseley, American war correspondents represented diverse societies from which they originated. These included a mix of sophisticated urbanites with academic backgrounds, rural hinterlanders who had hardly left their homeland, gifted linguists, people who knew no foreign languages, seasoned war correspondents, and novices. Their shared traits were eagerness and adventure, overwhelming patriotism, and a willingness to take risks and endanger their lives while serving all or part of the war. Moseley concluded that at the end of the war, 2.2% of American reporters had been killed and 6.8% had been injured, while the American military had experienced 2.5% and 4.2% of the same. [5]

"War correspondents are a society's window onto the battlefield," concluded historian Steven Casey. He extended this definition by classifying the literature on war correspondents into four categories: Firstly, some works specifically concentrate on the output of reporters.

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arrived back in England. See "Sir Geoffrey Cox: War reporter, diplomat and soldier who became a founding father of television journalism," *Independent,* April 4, 2008, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/sir-geoffrey-cox-war-reporter-diplomat-and-soldier-who-became-a-founding-father-of-television-journalism-804559.html, accessed July 15, 2024.

[4] Geoffrey Cox, *Eyewitness. A Memoir of Europe in the 1930s* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1999), 268.

[5] Ray Moseley, *Reporting War: How Foreign Correspondents Risked Capture, Torture and Death to Cover World War II* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2017), 3.

These anthologies frequently include the finest or most significant works by one or more prominent authors. Additionally, some writings go into the exploits of war correspondents amid conflict. Typically, these are memoirs written by the reporters themselves or "fast-paced narratives" written by biographers sympathetic to the subject. The third series of works aims to reveal the correspondents' intentions and methods of operation.[6]

War correspondents are frequently referred to as "soldiers of the press" in an appreciation manner. However, Casey clarified that reporters could remain safe at home or venture into perilous war zones in distant locations while soldiers were typically conscripted. His inquiry concerns whether they have gone to the front primarily because of the appeal of fame and fortune or if there have been other factors: a sense of duty, the fear of being regarded as irresponsible, or the attraction of companionship. While biographers frequently emphasize the autonomous nature of daring journalists, this supplementary viewpoint places them within a broader context. [7]

Journalism had not established itself as an institution, and American embassies did not have dedicated press or cultural attachés in the 1930s. As a result, American war correspondents worked independently, fostering strong relationships with American ambassadors and various officials. Journalists were autonomous and did not wish to be exploited as "instruments of a national policy." They were opportunistic individuals, resembling "scavengers" or "buzzards," who were determined to obtain the latest information, regardless of whose reputation might be harmed. They possessed strong personal perspectives that they chose not to conceal. [8]

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[6] Steven Casey, "War Correspondents," *Oxford Bibliographies Online*, January 11, 2024, https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780199791279/obo-9780199791279-0088.xml, accessed July 2, 2024.

[7] Ibid.

[8] John Gunther, *A Fragment of Autobiography. The Fun of Writing the Inside Books* (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1962), 5.

John Gunther represented the *Chicago Daily News* at the Vienna headquarters.[9]

Noteworthy journalists from various parts of the world gathered in European cities, like Paul Mowrer in Paris, Negley Farson in London, Leigh White in Berlin, Leland Stowe from Oslo to Moscow and other faraway places, and George Weller in Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. They transmitted war dispatches from Romania, most convening at the Athénée Palace Hotel in Bucharest. Several important American newspapers were also there, run by influential personalities linked to the places where their main offices were based. As an illustration, "Walter Duranty was Moscow; Raymond Swing was London; Jay Allen was Madrid; H. R. Knickerbocker and Dorothy Thompson were Berlin."[10] Gunther had two other colleagues, Marcel William Fodor, a Vienna and Berlin representative, and Dorothy Thompson, a Vienna correspondent and Central European bureau chief for the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*. After 1924, Thompson became the head of the Berlin bureau for the *New York Post*. Both Fodor and Thompson also reported from Bucharest.

Analyzing the historical and political context of Romanian-American relations shows that the interwar period was crucial, marked by remarkable events during World War II that significantly shaped identity development and representation. By the turn of the 20th century, Romanian and American priorities were neither aligned nor equitable. Their cooperation centered on commerce, politics, and immigration. American foreign policy adhered to the Monroe Doctrine and the recommendations provided by George Washington in his Farewell Address. They eschewed foreign imbroglios in European matters, although they were eager to engage in commerce. Early 20th-century Romanian-American relationships developed owing to Romania's significant geostrategic location at the intersection of shifting

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[9] Idem, *Inside Europe* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1938), ix–x.

[10] See Idem, *A Fragment of Autobiography*, 6.

spheres of influence. Contacts began to develop favorably when, after two years of neutrality, Romania joined the war by aligning with the Entente in 1916.

1918 was a decisive year for the great powers to redefine borders among the remnants of former empires: the surrender of Austria-Hungary and Germany's signature of an armistice with the Entente signified the conclusion of World War I. As the US delegate to the Paris Peace Conference, President Woodrow Wilson delineated the new ideals of European reconstruction: democracy and self-determination. His Fourteen Points had a profound impact on Central Europe, Romania included. Wilsonian political philosophy emphasized supplanting the conventional European-centric balance of power with shared security. During the 1920s and early 1930s, while experiencing economic crisis and isolationism, the United States established nonetheless commercial, cultural, and academic contacts with Romania.

On September 5, 1939, the United States declared its neutrality. The German forces crossed the Vistula River in Poland, which started the war. On December 8, 1941, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States and Britain declared war on Japan. On December 11, 1941, Hitler declared war on the United States, followed by Romania's declaration of war on December 12, 1941, so severing diplomatic relations between the two countries. On June 6, 1942, President Roosevelt enacted the resolution declaring a state of war between the USA and Romania, and on June 12, 1942, the first American airstrike targeted Romania at Ploesti (the Astra Romana Refinery). The war's progression in Europe thus rendered negotiations between the United States and Romania unachievable. American war correspondents witnessed all these momentous occurrences. After seeking refuge in Romania, they were forced to leave the country quickly between late 1939 and early 1940, significantly hindering communication and dialogue.

In Romania, key events encompassed the assassination of Prime Minister Armand Călinescu by the Legionnaires in September 1939, the cession of North-West Transylvania to Hungary after the Vienna Award in August 1940, the abdication of Carol II in favor of his son Mihai in September 1940, signaling the conclusion of King Carol's dictatorship, the establishment of the National Legionary State from September 1940 to January 1941, and the ensuing military dictatorship of Antonescu. After Codreanu's death, Horia Sima became the new leader of the Legion, and his role was elevated at a national level within the National Legionary State. He briefly served as a minister before but has assumed the role of deputy prime minister.

Members of the Legion headed five ministries, and fifty other Legionnaires were appointed as prefects across Romania's districts.[11] The antagonism between Antonescu and the Legionnaires intensified with political assassinations in November 1940. On October 7, 1940, German forces entered Romania, ostensibly to form a German Military Mission for its so-called protection. In the next month, Romania joined with the Axis Powers on November 23, 1940, foreshadowing catastrophic events, including the Bucharest Pogrom from January 21 to 23, 1941. This horror reached its peak with the National Legionary State when the new authorities swiftly began attacks against Romania's Jewish community.[12] During the 1941 Pogrom, crimes and atrocities were committed against the Jewish community. American journalists thoroughly documented the Bucharest Pogrom, requiring careful analysis due to its implied complexities. From January 21 to 23, 1941, the Legionnaires' rebellion erupted in Bucharest and was quelled by the government. On

[11] Roland Clark, *Holy Legionary Youth: Fascist Activism in Interwar Romania* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 222.

[12] Ibid, 223.

January 24, as Antonescu's military dictatorship was instituted, Romania's alignment with Germany was formalized.

Romania's strategic location at the crossroads of Central and Eastern Europe allowed Germany to exert control over the country during World War II, facilitating further operations into the Balkans. The United States was deeply concerned about Romanian oil resources, as their capture by the enemy could significantly increase Nazi influence in Central and Eastern Europe. Historian Paul D. Quinlan noted that in the turbulent late 1930s and 1940s, Eastern European and Balkan countries faced challenges maintaining their territories and autonomy. Situated at the crossroads of Germany and Russia, these nations have become a key area of conflict between their more powerful neighbors. Romania, a country of significant strategic importance in the Balkans, has been crucial in countering the Russian advance toward the Straits and the Mediterranean since the late 18th century. Romania's management of the Danube River estuary was significant due to its location near the Black Sea and the southern border of the Soviet Union. Romania had abundant natural resources and was the leading oil producer in Europe, second only to the Soviet Union.[13] American journalists documented World War II's critical historical, political, and military milestones fairly and professionally.

American historian and diplomat Ernest H. Latham, Jr. has significantly contributed to studying American correspondents in interwar Romania, examined through historical, political, and diplomatic lenses, with his succinct study entitled "Byzantium's Last Blossom: Anglo-American Journalism in Bucharest, 1939–1941," included in the anthology titled *Timeless and Transitory: 20th Century Relations Between Romania and the English-Speaking World*, with an introduction by American historian Paul

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[13] Paul D. Quinlan, *Clash Over Romania. British and American Policies toward Romania: 1938–1947*, vol. II (Los Angeles: American Romanian Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1977), 11.

Michelson.[14] All British and American correspondents included in this book, who published research findings between 1939 and 1941, are introduced with biographical information about their motivations for visiting Romania and the historical context of their visits. *Trailblazers of the Press* focuses on American reporters in Romania from the early 1930s to the early 1940s. It broadens the examination to include the Romanian-American social, cultural, identity, and political negotiations and the power dynamics intrinsic to their representations of otherness, as shown in American war journalism about Romania.

Romanian historian Nicolae Dascălu researched archival records related to Romania's endeavors to sway American journalism for propagandistic purposes from 1919 to 1939, as well as the broader context in which specific American publications were portrayed in interwar Romania and the politicians' responses to those who deviated from their narratives by depicting Romania unfavorably. Dascălu listed several American journalists who received specific "material facilities" from the Romanian Press Directorate, which are arguably accidental and not representative.[15] The American correspondents examined in our book represent the majority, who did not fulfill the Romanian authorities' propagandistic objectives and faced repercussions for their steadfast stance, exemplified by John Gunther, who was placed on the official deny list due to his "negative" portrayals of King Carol II's dictatorship. We believe that analyzing the narratives of American war correspondents about interwar Romania before examining their propagandistic representations by Romanian authorities may enhance the study and assist in discovering

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[14] Ernest H. Latham Jr., "Byzantium's Last Blossom: Anglo-American Journalism in Bucharest, 1939–1941," in *Timeless and Transitory: 20th Century Relations Between Romania and the English-Speaking World* (Bucharest: Vremea, 2012), 116–29.

[15] Nicolae Dascălu, *Imaginea României Mari în Statele Unite ale Americii în perioada interbelică: 1919–1939* (Bucharest: Editura Universității din București, 1998), 124.

inaccuracies in the information provided by archives. Examining their works provides a nuanced view of interwar and wartime Romania, further enhanced by the detailed documentation of their presence in the country and their attitudes toward the official leadership, as reflected in archival materials.[16]

The literature about the history of Romanian-American relations and negotiations includes Paul D. Quinlan, *The United States and Romania. American-Romanian Relations in the Twentieth Century;*[17] Stephen J. Randall, *United States Foreign Oil Policy since World War I: For Profit and Security;*[18] Gheorghe Buzatu, *A History of Romanian Oil;*[19] Vladimir F. Wertsman, *Salute to the Romanian Jews in America and Canada, 1850–2010. History, achievements and biographies;*[20] Mircea Răceanu, *Cronologie comentată a relațiilor româno-americane de la începutul cunoașterii reciproce până la prăbușirea regimului comunist în România*, 1989 [*Commented Chronology of the Romanian-American Relations from the Beginning of Mutual Knowledge until the Fall of the Communist Regime in Romania*, 1989];[21] Bernard A. Cook, Dumitru Preda, *United States of America and Romania: Diplomatic Relations: 1912–1919;*[22]

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16 See Idem, "Dictatul de la Viena în viziune americană," in *Relații Româno-Americane în timpurile modern,* ed. Gheorghe I. Florescu (Iași: Editura Universității „Al. I. Cuza," 1993) (231–246).

17 Quinlan, ed., *The United States and Romania. American-Romanian Relations in the Twentieth Century* (Woodlands Hills: American Romanian Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1988).

18 Stephen J. Randall, *United States Foreign Oil Policy since World War I: For Profit and Security* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 2005).

19 Gheorghe Buzatu, *A History of Romanian Oil*, Vol. II (Bucharest: Mica Valahie, 2011).

20 Vladimir F. Wertsman, *Salute to the Romanian Jews in America and Canada, 1850–2010. History, Achievements and Biographies* (Bloomington: Xlibris Corporation, 2010).

21 Mircea Răceanu, *Cronologie comentată a relațiilor româno-americane de la începutul cunoașterii reciproce până la prăbușirea regimului comunist în România, 1989* [*Commented Chronology of the Romanian-American Relations from the Beginning of Mutual Knowledge until the Fall of the Communist Regime in Romania, 1989*] (Bucharest: Silex, 2005).

22 Bernard A. Cook, Dumitru Preda, *United States of America and Romania: Diplomatic Relations: 1912–1919* (Bucharest: Cavallioti, 2010).

Dennis Deletant, *Hitler's Forgotten Ally: Ion Antonescu and His Regime, Romania, 1940–1944*;[23] Dennis Deletant, *Romania, 1916–1941. A Political History*;[24] Dennis Deletant, *In Search of Romania: A Memoir*;[25] Roland Clark, *Holy Legionary Youth: Fascist Activism in Interwar Romania*;[26] Grant T. Harward, *Romania's Holy War. Soldiers, Motivation, and the Holocaust*;[27] Keith Hitchins, Miodrag Milin, *Relații româno-americane/Romanian-American Relations*;[28] Gheorghe I. Florescu ed., *Relații româno-americane în timpurile moderne*;[29] Joseph H. Harrington, Bruce J. Courtney, *Relații româno-americane (1940–1990)*;[30] Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building, and Ethnic Struggle, 1918–1930*;[31] Ion Stanciu and Paul Cernovodeanu, *Distant Lands: The Genesis and Evolution of Romanian-American Relations*.[32]

For a contextual illustration of American foreign war journalism, the international secondary sources include *Breaking News: How the*

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[23] Dennis Deletant, *Hitler's Forgotten Ally: Ion Antonescu and His Regime, Romania, 1940–1944* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

[24] Idem, *Romania, 1916–1941. A Political History,* Routledge Histories of Central and Eastern Europe (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2023).

[25] Idem, *In Search of Romania: A Memoir* (London: Hurst & Co, 2022).

[26] Clark, *Holy Legionary Youth*.

[27] Grant T. Harward, *Romania's Holy War. Soldiers, Motivation, and the Holocaust* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2021).

[28] Keith Hitchins, Miodrag Milin, *Relații româno-americane/Romanian-American Relations* (Bucharest: Redacția Publicațiilor pentru Străinătate "România," 2001).

[29] Gheorghe I. Florescu, ed., *Relații româno-americane în timpurile moderne* (Iași: Institutul de Istorie "A. D. Xenopol," Editura Universității "Al. I. Cuza," 1993).

[30] Joseph H. Harrington, Bruce J. Courtney, *Relații româno-americane (1940–1990)* (Iași: Institutul European, 1998).

[31] Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building, and Ethnic Struggle, 1918–1930* (New York: Cornell University Pres, 1995).

[32] Ion Stanciu and Paul Cernovodeanu, *Distant Lands: The Genesis and Evolution of Romanian-American Relations* (Boulder, Colorado: East European Monographs; New York: Distributed by Columbia University Press, 1985). See also Stanciu, Cernovodeanu *Imaginea Lumii Noi în țările și primele lor relații cu Statele Unite ale Americii până la 1859* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei R.S. România, 1977).

Associated Press Has Covered War, Peace and Everything Else;[33] Nancy Caldwell Sorel, *The Women Who Wrote the War;*[34] Deborah Cohen, *Last Call at the Hotel Imperial: the Reporters Who Took on a World at War;*[35] Jean E. Collins, *She Was There: Stories of Pioneering Women Journalists;*[36] Penny Colman, *Where the Action Was: Women War Correspondents in World War II;*[37] Julia Edwards, *Women of the World: The Great Foreign Correspondents;*[38] Morrell Heald, *Transatlantic Vistas. American Journalists in Europe, 1900–1940;*[39] Herbert Lionel Matthews, *The Education of a Correspondent;*[40] John Maxwell Hamilton, *Journalism's Roving Eye. A History of American Foreign Reporting;*[41] Mitchel P. Roth, *Historical Dictionary of War Journalism;*[42] Stephen L. Vaughn, *Encyclopedia of American Journalism;*[43] Frederick S. Voss, *Reporting the War: The Journalistic Coverage of World War II;*[44] Susan

[33] Reporters of the Associated Press, *Breaking News: How the Associated Press Has Covered War, Peace and Everything Else* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2007).

[34] Nancy Caldwell Sorel, *The Women Who Wrote the War* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1999).

[35] Deborah Cohen, *Last Call at the Hotel Imperial: the Reporters Who Took on a World at War* (New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2022)

[36] Jean E. Collins, *She Was There: Stories of Pioneering Women Journalists* (New York: J. Messner, 1980).

[37] Penny Colman, *Where the Action Was: Women War Correspondents in World War II* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2002).

[38] Julia Edwards, *Women of the World: The Great Foreign Correspondents* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1988.

[39] Morrell Heald, *Transatlantic Vistas. American Journalists in Europe, 1900–1940* (Kent, Ohio and London, England: The Kent State University Press, 1988).

[40] Herbert Lionel Matthews, *The Education of a Correspondent* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1946).

[41] John Maxwell Hamilton, *Journalism's Roving Eye. A History of American Foreign Reporting* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009).

[42] Mitchel P. Roth, *Historical Dictionary of War Journalism* (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1997).

[43] Stephen L. Vaughn, *Encyclopedia of American Journalism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008).

[44] Frederick S. Voss, *Reporting the War: The Journalistic Coverage of World War II* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994).

Ware, *Letter to the World: Seven Women Who Shaped the American Century;*[45] *World War II. Unforgettable Stories and Photographs by Correspondents of the Associated Press*.[46] Written by prominent journalists and specialists in the history of American journalism, these books include comprehensive information on war correspondents, their activities and publications, articles, news accounts, and firsthand narratives of their experiences in Romania.

Space and place are basic concepts and benchmarks in examining travel narratives and journalistic accounts. Besides military and political sources of information, American correspondents' war reports from Europe also served as narratives of cultural journeys through heterotopian spaces viewed as concomitantly foreign and familiar, war-torn and vibrant. These authors examined a physically and politically fractured Europe in the context of World War Two. Their reports focused on exploring an estranged environment, revealing its plurality and synchrony, making it accessible from several viewpoints. Heterotopias establish communication between the inner spaces of memory and the external spaces of conflict and trauma, security and insecurity, normalcy and deviation, resemblance and otherness. These spaces are simultaneously distinct and equivalent in each component. Journalists would then link the vanished private places of their residences or hometowns (such as streets, stores, lounging spots, or walking paths) with foreign public spaces. This volume investigates public spaces like hotels, restaurants, cafés, bars, and hotel lobbies, defined as heterotopian settings that embrace individuals and their stories, experiences, and aspirations for a better life. These public spaces become heterogenous, temporary living spaces. In Michel Foucault's examination

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[45] Susan Ware, *Letter to the World: Seven Women Who Shaped the American Century* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998).

[46] The Associated Press, *World War II. Unforgettable Stories and Photographs by Correspondents of the Associated Press* (New York: The Associated Press, 2018).

of space, he emphasized its complex relationship with human existence, temporal experiences, and historical contexts:

> […] we do not live in a kind of void, inside of which we could place Individuals and things. We do not live inside a void that could be colored with diverse shades of light, we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another.[47]

"Sites of temporary relaxation," such as "cafés, cinemas, and beaches," and "closed or semi-closed sites of rest," including "the house, the bedroom, and the bed," can also be described by their "network of relations."[48] Other spaces both link and oppose these sites to be either utopias or tangible places:

> Utopias are sites with no real place. They are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society. They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any case, these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces.[49]

By contrast, "real places" are "places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society." Foucault observed a third category of places, which are, in fact, "counter-sites," which are "outside of all places" and "absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about." In Foucauldian terms, they are called heterotopias in "contrast to utopias."[50]

Hotels are exemplary heterotopian places. Among them, the Athénée Palace Hotel in Bucharest is a landmark in the story of foreign correspondents in interwar Romania. Hotels may be characterized as intermediates between domestic and public sites, representing idealized sites of security

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47 Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 23, DOI 10.2307/464648.

48 Ibid, 24.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

and recreation juxtaposed with tangible places during conflict and danger. The hotels used by American World War II correspondents can be described through their interactions with guests, which reflect their personal and professional lives, historical context, current circumstances, need for security, and engagement in the war. In addition to enjoyable experiences with their peers, war journalists often connected the distressing events in Europe to the hotels that served as symbolic representations of the Fascist regime.

In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau examined the relationship between space and place, defining place as the configuration that organizes elements within their interrelations:

> A place (lieu) is the order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence. It thus excludes the possibility of two things being in the same location (place) […]. A place is thus an instantaneous configuration of positions. It implies an indication of stability. A space exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities and time variables. Thus space is composed of intersections of mobile elements. It is in a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it. Space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programmes or contractual proximities […]. In contradistinction to the place, it has thus none of the univocity or stability of a 'proper.' In short, space is a practiced place. Thus the street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into a space by walkers.[51]

In contrast, *The Britannica Dictionary* defines "site as: "the place where something (such as a building) is, was, or will be located;" "a place where something important has happened" (including a battleground); "a place that is used for a particular activity" (an archaeological site).[52]

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[51] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1984), 117.

[52] *The Britannica Dictionary*, 2024, https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/site, accessed July 24, 2023

Place is then used to identify the precise position of an object, construction, or individual, and space is used to characterize a habitat where people congregate, interact, exchange information, and observe significant occurrences. It is a space where difference does not impede relationships. In the shadow of an impending war, it became a gathering place for war correspondents to meet, collaborate on efforts, and build lasting friendships. It was a dynamic space where people debated and shaped history while in transit. In such illustrious hotels, history was both vibrant and unfolding.

American travel and travel writing on Europe experienced significant transformations during the 20^{th} century, as the dramatic events of the world wars fundamentally shifted the philosophy of travel, transitioning from the traveler's quest for aesthetic enjoyment, intellectual curiosity, education, leisure, or adventures to the professional reporter and journalist's acute observations of frequently brutal and antagonistic realities. American literary historian Alfred Bendixen argues that the depiction of European otherness in American travel literature at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was markedly self-centered. Democracy, as the emblematic indicator of American identity, has served as a reference point for all representations. American travel writing had "contradictory impulses." On one side, everything deemed "a nationalistic aversion to praising anything foreign, undemocratic." On the contrary, it represented "an aesthetic desire to affirm and celebrate the achievements of art and culture embodied in European scenes."[53] The characteristics of American travel literature have also shaped the philosophy and style of journalism in its pursuit of democracy, tolerance, appreciation of beauty and the arts, and aversion to violence and intolerance.

[53] Alfred Bendixen, "American travel books about Europe before the Civil War," in Alfred Bendixen, Judith Hamera, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to American Travel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 103.

Literary historian William Merrill Decker argues that from the late 19th century to the early 20th century, American travel literature about Europe transcended earlier limitations of age, gender, otherness, and disciplines. Decker asserts that the relationship between the Old World and the New World is in a constant state of evolution due to the emergence of the world wars, "as Europe becomes a field of carnage as well as the site of museum past, the USA assumes a dominant role on the world stage."[54]

Besides specialized travelers earning income through travel, the category of travel writers also includes individuals who travel abroad for various professional reasons, like "anthropologists, archaeologists, business executives, engineers, geologists, and journalists," as well as historians, geographers, and diplomats. American war journalists exemplified what Barbara Brothers and Julia M. Gergits deemed "political travel," a phenomenon prevalent since the 20th century. Yet, beyond political reasons, "intellectual curiosity, the desire for adventure, and even pure escapism remain high on the list of reasons for travel, even for professional writers."[55]

American war correspondents displayed remarkable credentials and skill, with cosmopolitanism, tolerance, and substantial experience. They varied from experienced professionals to novice entrants, all exuding enthusiasm and fervor. They boldly sought essential information, undaunted by the dangers and distances of conflict zones. They were perceptive observers, diligently analyzing and verifying the news with other sources before sending their observations to American publications.

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[54] William Merrill Decker, "Americans in Europe: Henry James to the present," in Bendixen, Hamera, *The Cambridge Companion to American Travel,* 127.

[55] Barbara Brothers and Julia M. Gergits, eds., *Dictionary of Literary Biography,* vol. 204, *British Travel Writers. 1904–1997* (Detroit, Washington DC., London: A Bruccoli Clark Layman Book, The Gale Group, 1999), XVII.

Consequently, the Romanian-American identity and cultural communication transpired at a level that extended beyond local interpersonal relationships.

"*From Russia with Love.* The First Generation of American War Correspondents in Romania (1916–Early 1930s)" analyzes the representations of Romania by American war correspondents from 1916 to the early 1930s. It specifically highlights the first generation of American correspondents, who emerged during World War I, when most American journalists entered Romania via Russia. The chapter also analyzes the early 1930s, a period marked by the establishment of the Royal dictatorship and the noticeable rise of right-wing political extremism. The arrival of American correspondents in Romania during the late 1930s and early 1940s signified the emergence of the second generation, distinguished by a notable increase in both the quantity and quality of journalists. American interests in Romania throughout the two wars principally included military, diplomatic, economic, and political activities. Nonetheless, American World War I journalists significantly enhanced the understanding of Romania in the United States.

"*Vestiges of the Old Order.* American Correspondents Reporting on Identity Negotiations in Transylvania" incorporates the idea of identity negotiations, often used in psychology to delineate the processes of self-representation cultural and social interaction. This chapter pertains to cultural and historical analysis, investigating the research on American war reporter Leigh White's dispatches on Romania from 1939 to 1940, with particular emphasis on the partition of North-West Transylvania. It examines the discussions surrounding identity representation in the context of Romanians and minorities. It looks at how social interactions either align with or oppose their self-representations and the objectives they aim to achieve through these interactions. The historical context of identity debates in multicultural Transylvania was notably acute,

illustrating how communication may be obstructed during wartime. This chapter captures the pivotal occurrence of North-West Transylvania being ceded to Hungary by the Vienna Award in August 1940. Journalists such as Leigh White, Cyrus L. Sulzberger, Robert Parker, Robert St. John, Leland Stowe, Countess Rosa Goldschmidt Waldeck, Henry Gorrell and Ray Brock examined the attributes that delineate the identities of others. They examined the historical and cultural background while confronting their biases and assumptions, as well as the influence of official American or Romanian narratives and, in some cases, local restrictions.

"*To All the Other Generally Anonymous. Often Persecuted:* Intercultural and International Negotiations" analyzes the social, political, and cultural negotiations between *American Associated Press* war correspondent Robert St. John and the people and locales he met during his journalistic endeavors in pre-World War II Europe. The research observes his personal and professional development as he grows from an impulsive young adventurer to a dedicated and highly respected journalist. Robert St. John was one of the American war correspondents who thoroughly and objectively reported on Romania in his book chapters. St. John, a proficient *Associated Press* journalist, intentionally opted to serve as a correspondent in Romania. The chapter relies upon *The Associated Press* (AP) because of its prominence as a leading American news organization, established in 1846, and its considerable influence on the history of World War II. St. John's reports exhibit careful research, evocative narrative, and engaging skill in analyzing the war's progression in Europe and Romania's social, cultural, and political landscape. His volume entitled *War Correspondent* has St. John's Romanian dispatches organized into four sections. The chapter also refers to Robert Parker, the *Associated Press* bureau chief in Budapest, who recruited St. John. Porter was a skilled and prolific writer and journalist, recognized for chronicling his traumatic war experiences in *Headquarters Budapest*, with an extensive section on Romania.

"Journalist Hotels, or Spaces of Otherness" applies the concept of heterotopia as defined by Michel Foucault to describe the multiple sites and historical moments coexisting in public spaces like hotels, including their living and accommodation spaces, visited along the European itineraries to and from Romania followed by American World War II correspondents from Hotel Adlon in Berlin or the Viennese Hotel Imperial to Bucharest's Athénée Palace. The chapter describes heterotopian spaces like hotels, where they met, exchanged information, and experienced dramatic events during their journalistic assignments and investigations. It focuses on war correspondence, memoirs, and diaries published in books by journalists like John Gunther, Robert St. John, Leigh White, Robert Parker, and Countess R. G. Waldeck, who resided in Romania, in transit or for a longer time. Defined as heterotopias, spaces like hotels frequented by American correspondents and mentioned for their historical importance are characterized by in-betweenness, liminality, and transitionality. They are different from each of the familiar and domestic spaces they are meant to represent, and, at the same time, they are absorbing them all in a strange, remote, odd, sometimes claustrophobic space. They represent simultaneously memory and history, personal and public spaces, familiar and foreign, here and there, comfortable hotel and garrison room, secure and dangerous, in a time of war and psychological stress.

"*Amazons of the Press*: Women Journalists in Men's War" starts from the assumption that men did not entirely control the field of war journalism in the United States. It examines female war correspondents and photojournalists who ventured to Romania and chronicled its circumstances in the early 1940s at the outset of World War II. Female correspondents fulfilled their fundamental journalistic duties and were crucial battlefield witnesses. They had exceptional proficiency in depicting people and scenarios encountered in conflict via written narratives and photographic representations. Both Lee Miller and Margaret Bourke-

White were trailblazers of the photographic essay, while Miller mainly produced surrealist images. Information about the achievements of American women correspondents in Romania is scarce, except for the prominent Countess Waldeck. Recent books on the involvement of female journalists in World War II coverage have allocated sections to reporters such as Dorothy Thompson, Miller, Bourke-White, Sonia Tomara, Ann Stringer, Virginia Cowles, and Betty Wason, who also visited Romania. They were recognized for their bravery in challenging military officials to allow women to report directly from combat zones.

"Commensality beyond Politics: Cuisine, Flavors, and News" highlights the importance of gastronomy, food preparation, raw materials, and commensality in the heterotopian public spaces of restaurants, particularly regarding the integrity and diversity of American correspondents' narratives about their travels through war-torn Europe, including Romania. It also examines the impact of Romanian-American identity and cultural exchanges amid belligerence among diverse ethnic, cultural, political, and military groups within European society. The experience of food and communal sharing of meals significantly influenced how American correspondents depicted the restaurants they visited for fine dining before the war rendered such gatherings impossible. As the conflict progressed, menus and culinary preferences diminished in their capacity to unite people enjoying delectable meals. Flavors, recollections, and history were interwoven in vibrant heterotopias. Society has lost its tranquil uniformity, with people at restaurant tables split by ethnicity, politics, economics, and occupation. The war correspondents observed the interactions among the restaurant patrons rather than savoring the cuisine. They focused on cohabitation's practical and political dimensions while the artistic significance of cuisine diminished. Greedy politicians, officials, businesspeople, or diplomats supplanted the hedonists and epicureans. This shift of perspective on culinary art was prominently evident at Bucharest's

sophisticated establishments, such as the Athenée Palace dining room, as well as in Cina's and Capșa's. The research examines the luxury restaurants of interwar Bucharest, frequented by foreign officials, journalists, Romanian elites, politicians, diplomats, military leaders, and the declining aristocracy. They often sought to identify positive political trends and create complete platforms for public discourse.

"News and Coffee Sharing. Intellectual Mobility, and Global Communication" analyzes the representations of Romania by American war journalists, who were constant clients of Bucharest's cafés and bars during the late 1930s and early 1940s. Before and throughout World War II, European cafés and bars were vital gathering venues for American reporters. In Bucharest, the Athénée Palace bar and several cafés served as meeting points where they teamed up to address the harsh wartime events with mutual respect, support, and alliance. Foreign correspondents included Paul Mowrer in Paris, Negley Farson in London, Leigh White in Berlin, Leland Stowe in Oslo, who reported on the war's commencement from Moscow and other remote areas, and George Weller, who covered Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. Furthermore, they sent information about the wartime conditions in Romania, with the majority congregating in Bucharest. American war correspondents in Europe who traveled to Bucharest from their bases in Vienna, Paris, Madrid, or Budapest also connected international heterotopian spaces of social and cultural communication like cafés and bars, documenting and sharing their observations and experiences with their colleagues.

Trailblazers of the Press explores a topic often neglected in Romania's historical narrative. It highlights the crucial role of American journalists in documenting social, cultural, and historical events in Romania during World War II within a European context. It provides a comprehensive understanding of the Romanian people's cultural and social aspects by offering valuable historical, military, and diplomatic insights.

1. *From Russia with Love.* The First Generation of American War Correspondents in Romania (1916 – Early 1930s)

The chapter examines the representations of Romania by American war correspondents from 1916 to the early 1930s.[1] Two distinct generations of American correspondents from the 20th century journeyed to Romania. This chapter examines the initial generation of journalists who reported on World War I, primarily from Russia, where they witnessed the Bolshevik Revolution. Paradoxically, in addition to their Bolshevik sympathies, they included racial biases in their rhetoric about the Eastern alterity, displayed through Balkanism or the discourse about the marginalized East European countries. It thus discusses the period up to the early 1930s, highlighting early signs of widespread authoritarianism and right-wing political extremism in Romania.

With US interest and material support in Romania, the second generation of correspondents emerged during the late 1930s and early 1940s. It exhibited a significant improvement in amount and value, displaying greater constancy. From 1939 to 1941, as the war progressed, the United States became increasingly cognizant of the strategic, military, and diplomatic significance of the Balkans, going beyond its economic interests in the region. America's policies of neutrality and isolationism

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1 See Carmen Andraș, "Crossing the Borders of Cultures: the First Wave of American War Correspondents in Romania and the Transylvanian Case (1916 – Early 1930s," in *Crossing Borders: Insights into the Cultural and Intellectual History of Transylvania (1848–1948),* eds. Carmen Andraș, Cornel Sigmirean (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut – Gatineau: Symphologic Publishing, 2016), 199–232.

faced challenges.[2] Following their progress in Western Europe, the Germans proceeded towards Eastern Europe, where there was a rivalry between German and Russian dominance. An essay published in the *Evening Star* in the early 1940s attempted to elucidate the Balkan predicament: "As Russia advances towards the West, and Germany advances towards the East," one of the primary concerns for the United States was: "What will be the fate of the Balkans?" The author concluded that they were crucial to nearly every regional military battle. The author characterized the Balkans as a region that served as a gateway for invasion between Europe and Asia and as the origin of the war, where some of the most significant conflicts occurred. The crux of the matter was not their geographical position but its significance to Germany, the Allies, and the United States. Due to Romania's oil reserves and wealth of agricultural resources, the Balkans served as a crucial source of fuel and food, particularly for Germany. Under these circumstances, Romania found itself in a highly advantageous position due to its vast oil reserves.[3] This perspective elucidates the growing presence of American war correspondents in the region, namely in Romania, despite other press agencies having set up their offices in neighboring countries.

Throughout the interwar period, Romanian-American economic, diplomatic, and political negotiations were linked to cultural, intellectual, and media exchanges. The American interests in Romania during the world wars encompassed military and diplomatic aspects, driven by Romania's geo-strategic position.[4] Economic interests focused on oil and

[2] Alan Brinkley, *The Unfinished Nation. A Concise History of the American People*, vol. 2, From 1865 (New York and London: Overture Books, Mc. Graw-Hill, 1993), 717.

[3] *Evening Star,* March 17, 1940, 15. See *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Lib. of Congress*, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1940-03-17/ed-1/seq-121/, accessed 24 June, 2024.

[4] See Bernard A. Cook, Dumitru Preda, *United States of America and Romania: Diplomatic Relations: 1912–1919* (Bucharest: Cavallioti, 2010); Keith Hitchins, Miodrag Milin, *Relații*

trade,[5] while political interests centered on the protection of minority rights in Romania, particularly the critical situation of the Jewish minority.[6]

As in the United States, in the context of racially prejudiced representations of the Other, the concept of eugenics gained traction in interwar Romania, evolving into a variant of right-wing utopia that extended Darwinism to a new level. Historian Maria Bucur posited that eugenics represented a bold assertion of human agency over identity, historical trajectory, and destiny. Bucur noted that eugenics elicited both admiration and revulsion throughout the 19th century. However, it eventually became a significant instrument in politics and society, encompassing genetic and behavioral research. The interwar Romanian eugenics movement evolved into a complex and contradictory philosophy, revealing unexpected parallels with seemingly disparate entities such as Nazi Germany and the United States.[7]

But the debate on the perceived benefits of eugenics was not an interwar phenomenon with reverberations beyond Western milieus. Roughly three months after the break of the Great War in 1914, Calcutta *The Statesman* correspondent in London reported on an intellectual argument published in *The Times* a month earlier between Charles Darwin's son, politician, economist, and eugenicist Major Leonard Davis, and Major Ronald Ross, a doctor specializing in malaria and the first British Nobel Prize recipient, over the disgenic effects of war. The anonymous

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româno-americane/Romanian-American Relations (Bucharest: Redacția Publicațiilor pentru Străinătate "România," 2001).

[5] See Paul D. Quinlan, ed., *The United States and Romania. American-Romanian Relations in the Twentieth Century* (Woodlands Hills, California, American Romanian Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1988); Stephen J. Randall, *United States Foreign Oil Policy since World War I: For Profit and Security* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 2005). Gheorghe Buzatu, *A History of Romanian Oil*, Vol. II (Bucharest: Mica Valahie, 2011).

[6] See Vladimir F. Wertsman, *Salute to the Romanian Jews in America and Canada, 1850–2010. History, Achievements and Biographies* (Bloomington: Xlibris Corporation, 2010).

[7] Maria Bucur, *Eugenics and Modernization in Interwar Romania* (Pittsburgh PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002), 1–2.

correspondent was persuaded by Darwin's reasoning that war is fundamentally disgenic and posited that most individuals would concur with this claim in light of the present circumstances. Ross argued that his position was broad enough, but the correspondent found it hard to determine his exact stance and considered his arguments unpersuasive. In ancient times, warfare often resulted in the near-total destruction of enemies, favoring the survival of stronger nations.

Despite a focus on individual capability and survival of the fittest, nations experienced severe damage from prolonged conflicts. The correspondent highlighted the patent differences between past and present circumstances and observed that modern warfare indiscriminately targeted the weak and the strong. Contrary to how Ross painted it, the reporter argued that losing a significant part of a nation's strength cannot be offset by removing weaker individuals. Ross neglected that military service excludes the elderly, young, and weak and that war ultimately harms a nation's virility. However, Ross emphasized the difference between voluntary armies, such as the English, and conscripted forces, arguing that war is more dysgenic in the former case. The correspondent suggested that the distinction was largely insignificant when considering all factors and concluded that Darwin was justified in claiming that modern warfare was distinctly dysgenic.[8] War, eugenics and national health and hygiene were thus seen as intrinsically connected to social and individual identity, particularly connected to gendered constructs.

Given the transnational, cross-cultural, and interdisciplinary implications of war, journalism, and ideology during World War I, this chapter's

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[8] "Science Notes. Eugenics and War. (From Our Correspondent)" (Press cutting: Science Notes. Eugenics and War in the Statesman, Calcutta, November 8, 1914), 131 – Lectures delivered by Ross to various institutions and organisations, 10 – Lecture "Evolution and War" delivered to the Students Union at the London School of Economics and Political Science on 4 November 1914, with material on a letter to the *Times* on the same subject, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, file 22.

timeline centers on a period marked by two significant historical events connected to the Great War. The first event occurred in 1916, when Romania joined the war as a partner of the Allied Powers, which included Great Britain, France, Italy, and Russia. They were fighting against the Central Powers, which consisted of Germany, the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, the Ottoman Empire, and Bulgaria. The second event occurred in 1920 when the Great Powers officially acknowledged Greater Romania as an independent nation. However, political instability stemming from conflicting modernization and traditionalism hindered Greater Romania's goal of uniting ethnic Romanians in surrounding territories under the Romanian Kingdom.[9]

Regarding diplomatic relations, Charles J. Vopicka, a trusted ally of Romania, was designated the United States Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Romania. In 1913, he formally delivered his letters of accreditation to King Carol I.[10] Romania ended its two-year neutrality and became an integral part of the Allies in 1916. However, Germany quickly took control of it in the same year. The United States of America officially declared war on Germany and joined the Allies on April 6, 1917. In Romania's international relations, a highly awaited event occurred several months later, on October 1, 1917. Dr. Constantin Angelescu was appointed the Romanian Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States. Therefore, the Romanian Legation was established in Washington.[11] 1918 marked a crucial turning point for the Western nations as they established new boundaries on the remnants of the former empires. The most significant changes occurred

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[9] Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building, and Ethnic Struggle, 1918–1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995) 4–5.

[10] See Mircea Răceanu, *Cronologie comentată a relațiilor româno-americane de la începutul cunoașterii reciproce până la prăbușirea regimului comunist în România, 1989* (Bucharest: Silex, 2005), 75.

[11] Ibid, 82.

when Austria-Hungary capitulated and Germany signed the armistice with the Entente, marking the conclusion of World War I.

During the Paris Peace Conference, from January 1919 to January 1920, the Great Powers established a new map of Europe. As a representative of the United States, President Woodrow Wilson played a crucial role in emphasizing the novel principles of European rebuilding, namely democracy and self-determination. The freshly declared Greater Romania conveyed its dissatisfaction with the American stance over the future of Transylvania through its officials. The cause of dissatisfaction stemmed from President Wilson's initial hesitance towards the dissolution of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. Austria served as a significant commercial partner for America and played a crucial role in maintaining the balance of power in Europe. Additionally, it hindered the Soviet Union's growth in Europe. Nevertheless, Romania was poised to enter multiple international treaties that would serve its interests, thanks to the backing of the United States.

One of these agreements was the Treaty of Trianon, which was highly debated and signed on June 4, 1920. This treaty resolved the Transylvanian question in favor of Romania. Therefore, the Romanian modern state was incorporated into the newly established European map devised by the Western Powers. According to American correspondent Leigh White, in a concise historical interpretation, the Western Powers can be seen as the "godparents" of Romania, referred to as the "wayward daughter of modern Europe." Romania's natural richness can be considered her dowry, and the Treaty of Paris can be seen as her inherent right.[12]

Regarding American correspondence on Romania, Maria Todorova's approach to Balkan discourse analysis must be acknowledged, focusing on how Central and Eastern Europe is portrayed in Anglo-American

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[12] Leigh White, *The Long Balkan Night* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), 48.

representations. In her acclaimed work *Imagining the Balkans*, Todorova succinctly portrayed distinct prejudices discovered in the correspondence of three American journalists who visited the Balkans: John Reed, John Gunther, and Paul Scott Mowrer. It also featured concise allusions to Romania.[13]

The analysis examines several facets of the American correspondents' discourse on identity as they travel across the boundaries of Central and Eastern Europe. This rhetoric is a combination of Balkanism and racism, as well as aspects of Bolshevism and Russian-inspired Socialism. It is all presented within the context of American democracy. The discourse can be classified as Balkanist since it applies all the representational mechanisms of Orientalism to the specific setting of Central and Eastern Europe. Furthermore, it can be characterized as a racist rhetoric, namely a contemporary kind, as described by Maria Todorova within the context of the Balkans.[14]

The characterization of a peculiar Balkan ethnicity in this context highlights the apparent inclination of American correspondents toward emphasizing the concept of race rather than nationality. The emphasis is placed on a shapeless Balkan population's unconscious, hereditary, and unchangeable characteristics. However, the concept of nation encompasses the logical and intentional aspects of constructing one's identity. The discourse might be described as a political speech that promotes Socialist ideals while criticizing monarchy, aristocracy, and the bourgeoisie. It takes the form of a conventional Balkan operetta, using metaphorical language. These factors contribute to the emergence of cultural and social selection theories, which are notably aligned with the ideologies

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[13] Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). Todorova succinctly analyses certain American journalists' Balkanist discourses: John Reed (46), John Gunther (244–5) and Paul Scott Mowrer (34).

[14] Ibid, 123.

of socialism and communism that were established in the early 20th century. According to W. C. Runciman's conclusion on the early 20th century French socialists, it seems that they observed the persistent reproduction of some primary characteristics in different races, considered inferior and even harmful in the modern world, without any possibility of breaking free from this cycle.[15]

Consequently, it was a type of social selection hindered by an inherited illness, which posed a potential threat of spreading over Europe. At a widely comprehensible level, this phenomenon was referred to as Balkanization. As a result, the circle of Balkanist rhetoric ended, encompassing many parts of propagandistic political and ideological discourses.

The Impact of Balkanist Stereotypes and Socialist Propaganda on American War Correspondence

During the initial years of World War I, the United States maintained a neutral stance from 1914 until the spring of 1917. American journalists reporting from Europe had a relatively secure position and freedom of movement, even in areas controlled by German forces. Several of them traveled to Russia and stayed there for an extended period. They traveled to Romania in this situation. Most demonstrated steadfast pro-Russian emotions and belief in the democratic objectives of the Bolshevik Revolution. They witnessed the Russian army's activities in Transylvania as it advanced on the Eastern Front against Austria-Hungary. This occurred before Russia's withdrawal from the war after the Bolshevik Revolution. Isolated and facing two separate adversaries, Bulgaria in Southern Dobrudja or the Cadrilater and Austria-Hungary in Transylvania, Romania had no alternative but to surrender.

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[15] W.G. Runciman, *The Theory of Cultural and Social Selection* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 180.

In December 1917, Romania concluded an armistice with the Central Powers. In the same month, Soviet Russia reciprocated with Germany. The American diplomatic policies toward Russia reflected President Woodrow Wilson's concern and uncertainty: "whether he should use force to destroy the Bolsheviks or court them with a series of liberal promises." Following the Bolsheviks' takeover of Russia, he concluded that his sole option was to endeavor to win them over. President Wilson's dedication to the "Fourteen Points peace plan," based on his principles of self-determination and democracy, led him to suggest that other countries should respect Russia's rightful requirement to establish its own political system and national policy independently. The United States' reluctance to intervene in Russia's internal matters could still allow the Bolsheviks to strengthen their control domestically and initiate a significant revolutionary offensive against the United States and its allies.[16] Despite the valid concerns, President Franklin D. Roosevelt awarded the Soviet Union "full diplomatic recognition" in 1933.[17]

During his journey through war-torn Europe, Granville Roland Fortescue, an American journalist who had graduated from the Army Staff College and worked as a special reporter for the *London Daily Telegraph*, personally observed the outbreak of World War I. He compiled his notes and observations in several books. They included *At the Front with Three Allies: My Adventures in the Great War* (1914), *Russia, the Balkans and the Dardanelles* (1915), and *Front Line and Deadline. The Experiences of a War Correspondent* (1937). According to his memoirs, he identified himself as the "illegitimate son of Robert Roosevelt," who was the uncle of President Roosevelt.[18] The President chose him to serve as one of his military

[16] Alex Roberto Hybel, *Made by the USA: The International System* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 113.

[17] Ibid, 114–15.

[18] Ed Klekowski and Libby Klekowski, *Eyewitnesses to the Great War. American Writers, Volunteers and Soldiers in France, 1914–1918* (Jefferson: McFarlan, 2012), 153.

advisers, and he was assigned as a US military attaché with the Japanese army during the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905). Fortescue believed that his firsthand experience observing large armies in "modern warfare" greatly benefited his profession as a war correspondent.[19] He also prided himself with the "Order of the Rising Sun" and the "Campaign Medal" awarded by the Japanese Government in recognition of his accomplishments. Following several military achievements, in 1914, while traveling in Belgium as an independent writer, he penned an essay about "the German motoring into Visé," which, as he recounts, "broke in London August 3rd and in New York the same day." The revelation caused a state of shock and surprise worldwide.[20]

Fortescue inferred from his findings that Germany violated Belgium's neutrality and intended to declare war. On August 1st, he correctly discerned that it was "the beginning of the long-expected European Armageddon."[21] This was also the beginning of his notable journalistic vocation with the *London Daily Telegraph*. Captain Fortescue covered Belgium, France, Germany, Austria, Serbia, Poland, Russia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Turkey between 1914 and 1915.[22] In 1915, he temporarily halted his residence in Romania to witness the Battle of Gallipoli at the Dardanelles Straits and the Allies' endeavors to confront the Turkish army, which had already aligned with Germany. Per his arrival in Bucharest and the recommendation of the American Minister, he agreed to undertake a mission to Serbia concerning the Austrian detainees.[23] He proceeded with his assignment in Bulgaria. Upon his eventual arrival in Bucharest, he was summoned back to London.[24]

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19 Granville Fortescue, *Front Line and Deadline. The Experiences of a War Correspondent* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1937), 6.

20 Ibid, 32.

21 Ibid, 31.

22 Fortescue also witnessed the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s.

23 Ibid, 259.

24 Ibid. Colonel Thomson of the British Intelligence Service, later known as Lord Thomson, informed Fortescue in Bucharest that the dispatches he had sent from the

In Fortescue's understanding, neutral Romania was a "peaceful" and "prosperous" nation then. Although it was "hemmed in all sides by fighting armies," life went on "fairly placid grooves."[25] He compared Romania's trading status to the United States during the war, highlighting the advantage of unrestricted access to German markets. He claimed that Romania's commercial advantages resulted in significant wealth, as seen in his perception of Bucharest. Applying Balkan prejudices, he ascribed to the recurrent images of operatic monarchs and effeminate military men, who sometimes became formidable fighters. In his perspective, Romania, divided into smaller, fragmented regions, resembled a stage for a light-hearted "musical comedy."[26] Fortescue observed the complexity of Romania's deliberation to join the war. He detected a prominent pro-Entente sentiment, mainly due to the Russian army's Carpathian in the winter of 1915. Fortescue pondered the possibility of turning her aspiration of incorporating Transylvania into her territory into actuality.[27]

Despite carefully considering all the factors that could result in Romania aligning with the Entente, the progress of military events on the Eastern Front disheartened him. The preliminary negotiations between Romania and the Entente regarding the terms of Romania's participation in the war ended when the Russian forces withdrew from the Carpathian Mountains.[28] However, Austria, motivated by their military achievements

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Dardanelles caused controversy in the British Parliament, reporting the actual and disastrous situation of the British Naval Force in the Straits, which the Government had intended to conceal. Lord Thomson's devotion and reverence for Romanian Princess Martha Bibescu have attained legendary fame. Lord Thomson died in the 1930 accident of the British Airship R.101. See Martha Bibescu, *Destinul Lordului Thomson of Cardington*, urmat de *Smaranda, de generalul de brigadă lord Thomson of Cardington* (Bucharest: Compania, 2007).

25 Fortescue, Special Correspondent of the Daily Telegraph, *Russia. The Balkans and the Dardanelles* (London: Andrew Melrose, 1915), 170–1.

26 Ibid, 171.

27 Ibid, 173

28 Ibid.

in Galicia, suggested that Romania adopt a "friendly neutrality" position, granting them the privilege of transporting weapons across Romanian territory to Turkey. As a reciprocal arrangement, Romania would acquire the historically significant region of Bukovina.[29] Commitments were established for Bessarabia, but Transylvania was not explicitly mentioned.[30] Fortescue rightfully considered Prime Minister Ion I. C. Brătianu's held the reigns of Romania's destiny.[31] He contended that a Balkan-centric viewpoint influenced the Romanian Premier's perspective on Europe. He based his judgment solely on what he believed would be most advantageous for his country, strongly supporting the "policy of neutrality."[32] According to Fortescue, Romania's Prime Minister aimed to maintain good relations with all parties to ensure their protection. His ability to manage diplomatic matters was evident in his successful actions.[33]

John Reed, an American writer, Harvard College alumnus, socialist activist, and correspondent for *Metropolitan Magazine,* also journeyed to Romania. Upon the commencement of the war in August 1914, Reed expeditiously departed for Europe as a correspondent. Reed then embarked on a tour of Western European nations, including England, France, Switzerland, Italy, Germany, and Belgium. After observing multiple wartime battles, he returned to New York in February 1915. Shortly after that, in the company of Boardman Robinson, he embarked on a journey to Eastern Europe.[34] His volume, *The War in Eastern Europe. Described by John Reed. Pictured by Boardman Robinson,* describes this second phase of his European journey. Romania is included in the chapter titled "The

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[29] Ibid, 174.
[30] Ibid, 175.
[31] Ibid, 176.
[32] Ibid, 177.
[33] Ibid, 181.
[34] John Reed, *The War in Eastern Europe.* Described by John Reed. Pictured by Boardman Robinson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), V.

Burning Balkans." He married feminist poet, playwright, and society columnist Louise Bryant, whom he met in Portland. She worked as an illustrator for the *Oregon Spectator* and contributed essays and plays to progressive periodicals like *The Masses*.[35] In 1917, Reed was fired from his position at the *Metropolitan Magazine* due to his authorship of articles against the United States' involvement in the war. Instead, he was employed by the *New York Mail* and *The Masses* and was again warned to alter his pacifist stance. In August 1917, he and his spouse, feminist author Louise Bryant, departed for Petrograd. Reed became an enthusiastic advocate of Bolshevism after joining communist groups. He gained notoriety by publishing his memoirs of the October Revolution, titled *Ten Days that Shook the World*. Reed passed away in Russia in 1920 and was interred at the Kremlin Wall Necropolis.[36] Louise Bryant secured employment with the Hearst publications and, in 1924, wed Ambassador William Bullitt.[37]

Reed believed that war correspondence was fated to provide American authorities and ordinary readers with a comprehensive and vibrant portrayal of the events unfolding in Europe during those tumultuous times. "It was to be a three-month's flying journey," as he defined the chaotic events:

> […] we were going to see Italy enter the war, Venice destroyed by the Austrians; be in Serbia in time for the last stand of the Serbs; watch Rumania plunge into the conflict; stand by at the fall of Constantinople; accompany the Russians steam-roller to Berlin; spend a month in the Caucasus reporting barbarically colored battles between Cossack and Turks.[38]

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[35] Michael Munk, "Louise Bryant (1885–1936)," *Oregon Encyclopedia* https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/bryant_louise_1885_1936_/, accessed July 22, 2024.

[36] See *John Reed*, *American Biography Online*, http://www.anb.org/articles/16/16-01357.html, accessed on July 22, 2024.

[37] Munk, "Louise Bryant."

[38] Reed, *The War in Eastern Europe*, V.

He meant "getting mixed up with the great Russian retreat, and flitting through the Balkans at the beginning of the German drive."[39] Reed and war illustrator Boardman Robinson planned "to observe the more normal life of Eastern nations, under the steady strain of long-drawn-out warfare."[40] Examining the war developments in Europe also implied observing the political and social characteristics. He preferred staying at the Athenée Palace Hotel in Bucharest instead of objectively assessing the individuals encountered in Eastern Europe between April and October 1915.[41] The socialist within him disapproved of the bourgeois lifestyle in Bucharest. His analysis was superficial and lacked a thorough historical context:

> What is the trend of Romanian public opinion? – he asked rhetorically. There is no public opinion in Romania. The peasants will fight for whatever their masters decide will give them the greatest country to exploit. […] So one must ask the politicians, and they will reply that Rumania will join the side that satisfies 'national aspirations' – as they call cupidity in the Balkans.[42]

Reed reiterated stereotypical interpretations about Transylvania, such as its historical significance as "the birthplace of the race"[43] or "the Transylvanians are rich and civilized." He accepted that a significant portion of the population spoke the Romanian language, but he sarcastically commented on Romania's national ambitions, founded on ethnographical factors.[44] He attributed Romania's woes to its unreliable, corrupt, and war-like character, which he described as Balkan. He claimed the "Balkanians" justified their territorial conquests as "national aspirations" under the pretext of strategic reasons.[45]

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[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid, VI.
[41] Ibid, IX.
[42] Ibid, 303.
[43] Ibid, 304.
[44] Ibid, 305.
[45] Ibid, 304.

In December 1916, shortly before Bucharest's German occupation, Charles J. Vopicka, who served as the United States Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Romania, Serbia, and Bulgaria from 1913 to 1920, warmly welcomed Stanley Washburn, an American correspondent for the *London Times*. He was allowed to accompany the Romanian Army on the Transylvanian front. Upon returning in October, he thoroughly depicted Romania's precarious condition. Romania could not confront adversaries from Bulgaria in Dobrudja and Austria-Hungary in Transylvania. Vopicka recalled hearing Washburn's statement that Romania was lost:

> He [Washburn] said to me in confidence, 'Poor Roumania is lost.' This was heartbreaking, as my sympathy with the people among whom I was living was very great, but his opinion was confirmed by all the information I could obtain later from the highest sources.[46]

Washburn began his journalistic career as a war correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News* a few years prior. He reported on the Russo-Japanese dispute from the perspective of the Russian side from 1904 to 1905. Starting in 1914, Washburn was an affiliate of the Russian Imperial Staff in the field as a special correspondent for the *London Times*. He provided coverage of the Eastern front from the perspective of the Russian side. He traveled to Romania under these conditions. In his published field notes titled *The Russian Advance,* it was stated that Romania's decision to join the Allied Powers in August 1916 marked the start of a significant phase in the war on the eastern front. The author noted that introducing this powerful new army against a common enemy would significantly influence the war overall.[47]

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[46] Charles J. Vopicka, *Secrets of the Balkans, Seven Years of Diplomatist's Life in the Storm Centre of Europe* (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1921), 99–100. Vopicka was the United States Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Romania, Serbia, and Bulgaria between 1913 and 1920.

[47] Stanley Washburn, *The Russian Advance. Being the Third Volume of Field Notes from the Russian Front, Embracing the Period from June 5th to September 1st, 1916* (New York:

Upon traveling to Romania in September 1916, the situation was not auspicious. In his article "The Tragedy of Roumania" for the *Atlantic Monthly*, Washburn mentioned having recently left the staff of the former Tsar. A request was made from Russian authorities to Romania's command, seeking all possible ways to assess the situation. These letters granted him immediate access to King Ferdinand I, Queen Marie of Romania, the Romanian General Staff, and other influential members of the Romanian administration. He departed in late fall, traveling over five thousand kilometers and visiting various locations along the Romanian front. His assessment of the Romanian cause was formed from firsthand evidence gathered at the time. He sought to engage the American public and emphasize Romania's significant challenges after giving up its neutrality. When he arrived in Romania in September, the army was making substantial advances in Transylvania, while the international community praised the bravery and effectiveness of the Romanian forces without reservations. After the German occupation of Bucharest, there was a prevalent perception that Romania's choice to enter the war at that time was unjustified and regarded as treason. However, Washburn was confident that Russia and the other allies did not intend to neglect their obligations or commitments towards this small country.[48] His remarks became blatant propaganda in favor of "great Russia:"

> Roumania is now feeling for the first time the pressure of war and the bitterness of defeat; but Roumania must realize that her defeats are but incidents in the greater campaign; for behind her stands great Russia, who will see to it that her brave little ally, who has come into the war for a just cause, does not ultimately suffer for daring to espouse this cause for which we are all fighting. I can speak with authority when I state that,

Doubleday, Page & Company, 1917), 264–5. Washburn was a Special Correspondent of the London Times with the Russian Armies.

[48] Idem, "The Tragedy of Roumania," *The Atlantic Monthly* (December 1917): 843–51. https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1917/12/the-tragedy-of-roumania/564869/, accessed July 12, 2024.

> from the Emperor down to the common soldier, there is a united sentiment in Russia that Roumania shall be protected, helped, and supported in every way possible. Roumanians must feel faith in Russia and the Russian people, and must also know that in the efforts we are making to save them sentiment is the dominant factor, and we are not doing it merely as a question of protecting our own selfish interest and our left flank.[49]

Like John Reed, Washburn harbored deep sentiments of empathy and dedication for Russia and, later, the Soviet Union. This profound reverence will endure as several American reporters have become ardent advocates of Bolshevism. They began to reassess their stance in response to the Soviet Union's aggressive expansion only towards the conclusion of World War II.

The years following the war were characterized by a period of relative tranquility. Paul Scott Mowrer, an American correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News*, referred to Europe as "Balkanized" during this reconfiguration period. He was stationed in Europe and visited Romania in the early 1920s. His tour laid the groundwork for his son, Richard Mowrer, who would later follow him and report from Romania in the 1940s as a journalist for the *Chicago Daily News*. Paul Scott Mowrer reported on the Balkan conflicts from 1911 to 1913 and World War I. He was sent to the French General Headquarters for the duration of the war, after which he assumed the role of a diplomatic correspondent. Mowrer was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1928 for his exceptional overseas correspondence.[50]

He collected his European memoirs documenting the period immediately following the war in a fractured Europe. The works include *A Study of Analysis and Reconstruction*, published in 1921, and *The House of Europe*, published in 1945. Within the fragmented or Balkanized Europe, he allocated a substantial section of his work, consisting of ten pages,

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[49] Ibid.

[50] P. Mitchel Roth, *Historical Dictionary of War Journalism* (Westport, Connecticut, and London: Greenwood Press, 1997), 211–12.

to Romania. The initial section primarily consists of theoretical content, encompassing chapters such as "The New Geography," "The Crossways of Races," "The Meaning of 'Balkanization,'" "The Disintegration of Austria-Hungary," "Some Racial Distinctions," and "Hegemony or Federation." By analyzing his work through the lens of Balkanism in the postcolonial context, we can perceive distinct boundaries separating the European core from its outer regions. He proposed a correlation between Balkan ethnicity and a hereditary "mental disorder," which he referred to as "Balkanization." The main goal was for the most robust and capable individuals to prevent the spread of this disease across Europe and, if possible, eradicate it.[51]

But this situation was not unique. Balkanism has already been synonymous with the dispersion of authority, racial and national inferiority, brutality, and an aggressive nature. In addition, Mowrer observed that the entirety of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe was succumbing to Balkanization. According to him, World War I disrupted the balance of power and the subsequent peace resolutions were significantly affected by the American political philosophy of "ethnological boundaries," but he failed to acknowledge this.[52] Establishing linguistic and ethnological boundaries, which Mowrer did not envision as a solution as the entire region was fragmented or "Balkanized" into several nominally "national" states, characterized as small, weak, envious, fearful, economically reliant, and susceptible to manipulation, leading to countless troubles, including wars.[53] He believed this was a "mental" disorder, as each of these smaller states was abnormally self-centered, disenchanted with great powers, fearful of neighboring countries, fixated on propaganda and military buildup, and destabilized by civil unrest. [54] They found themselves among

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[51] Paul Scott Mowrer, *Balkanized Europe. A Study of Analysis and Reconstruction* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1921), 3–4.

[52] Ibid, 27.

[53] Ibid, 4.

[54] Ibid.

the remnants of the once-mighty empires, which, he believed, were inevitably destined for decline. What they abandoned resembled a vibrant and multicolored "new-art sofa pillow."[55] The creators of the new world faced the challenge of addressing Europe's reconfiguration and developing an effective stabilization strategy. For Mowrer, the American democratic experience was crucial in shaping this New Formula.[56]

In a volatile environment, Romania faced the challenge of acquiring the principles of democracy. Mowrer extensively addressed the subject of the Balkan minor nations' post-war fate in a dedicated chapter and throughout the entire work with illustrative examples. He portrayed Romania as positioned at the frontier of significant territorial interests. Mowrer perceived it as an isolated entity, encompassed by a burgeoning Pan-Slavism, which he believed was the sole basis for comparison with Hungary.[57]

Providentially, according to Mowrer's enthusiastic assessment, Bolshevism did not possess the anticipated level of strength and, hence, did not threaten the Western world or Eastern Europe.[58] According to him, Romania's distinguishing characteristic was its Latin heritage, setting it apart from all its neighboring countries.[59] He considered that abundant natural resources led to envy and greed from other nations.[60]

Fortunately, in Mowrer's interpretation, its natural boundaries made it an unconquerable fortress.[61] He noted that Romania's isolation was accentuated by dissatisfaction and mistrust towards its long-standing ally, France and Great Britain, due to its reluctance to intervene in Russia's

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55 Ibid, 27.
56 Ibid, 153.
57 Ibid, 218.
58 Ibid, 129–36.
59 Ibid, 218.
60 Ibid, 217.
61 Ibid.

regional strategy.[62] Mowrer claimed that within "their complicated speculations, looking toward the guarantee of their own safety," the Romanians would understand that "to counterbalance the pan-Slav danger," they had to "seek the support of Germany itself." Even if they did not have confidence in the politics of the Western states, they would have to admit the offers of Germany, "which with Austria, had pretty well conquered the Romanian market before the war" and could offer "better terms" and "quicker deliveries" than those by Great Britain, France, and the United States.[63]

Mowrer was moderately positive about Romania's internal political affairs as the government was led by "experienced political leaders, such as Take Jonescu and the Bratianos." In his view, the conservatives and Germanophiles, such as Alexandru Marghiloman, had unequivocally exited the political arena, paving the way for democratic and liberal parties. According to Mowrer, General Alexandru Averescu's popularity gave the government a clear and stable position in the current political environment. The one weakness of the newly formed government of unified Romania was that the "Transylvanian mountaineers," who possessed superior knowledge, strength of character, and energy compared to their fellow countrymen in the vast, wealthy, and indolent grain lands, were inadequately represented.[64] He specifically mentioned the leaders of Transylvania, who were expected to have significant influence in the country, Alexandru Vaida Voievod and Iuliu Maniu.[65] Mowrer strongly advocated for building a modern state by effectively addressing social, national, economic, and political challenges, especially regarding minorities, despite Romania's "Balkanized" condition. In politics, the Romanians assumed the position

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[62] Ibid, 220–1.
[63] Ibid, 221.
[64] Ibid, 222.
[65] Ibid, 223.

of "realistic opportunists" in the emerging European political landscape. Given their precarious situation, surrounded by adversaries, they were compelled to prioritize their interests. Their military capabilities were limited, and their fate was intricately tied to the outcomes experienced by other nations.[66]

In the following years, approximately between 1924 and 1926, Negley Farson, a correspondent for the overseas and London-based *Chicago Daily News*, embarked on a journey along the Danube River, traversing the borders of many European countries. He commenced his professional journey as an entrepreneur in New York and later relocated to Great Britain, where he pursued a career as an engineer in Manchester. He was designated as an agent for an English-American export corporation and was dispatched to Tsarist Russia to secure war contracts. He resided in Petrograd for five years before returning to the United States. He went back to Russia only to observe the outbreak of the Bolshevik Revolution. He commenced his writing profession as an independent writer and, starting in 1924, as a correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News*. He reported on his journeys throughout Europe. As a member of the Royal British Air Force in Egypt, he documented numerous military achievements. In 1920, he married Enid Eveleen (Eve) née Stoker, the renowned British author Bram Stoker's niece.[67] While serving as a nurse with the Voluntary Aid Detachment during World War I and working in a London hospital, Eve Stoker met Negley Farson, a Royal British Air Force member recovering from an aircraft accident. She was awarded the "Certificate: British Red Cross Society and Order of St. John of Jerusalem in England to Miss

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[66] Mowrer, *The House of Europe* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1945), 383.

[67] See "Negley Farson Papers, 1905–1975 (Bulk 1914–1960)" (Collection, University of Wyoming, 2010), 07561, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming https://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv820456, accessed April 12, 2024. American Heritage Center GENY. https://www.geni.com/people/Negley-Farson/6000000077192110482, accessed April 12, 2024.

Enid Evelyn Stoker in recognition of valuable service during the war, 1919."

After their marriage, Eve accompanied Farson on several global expeditions. She wrote numerous manuscripts and kept diaries that documented their shared experiences. Negley's writings have significantly enhanced our understanding of Eve, with four of Eve's manuscripts preserved in the Negley Farson Papers Collection. The works titled "Down the Congo River," "Lake Islands in Africa," "A Postage Stamp Country," and "With the Peres Blancs in Ruanda Irudi" provide insights into Eve's opinion of the couple's travels around Africa. The manuscripts, presumably from 1939, offer a vivid picture.[68] They traveled across Europe, including Romania. During his time in Russia, he joined his "comrade," John Reed, an ardent communist, who closely observed the developments throughout the Revolution.

In the book *The Way of Transgression*, first published in 1935, Farson devoted approximately one hundred pages to John Reed's political activities in Russia. One notable event was Reed's arrest by the Tsarist authorities in 1916 for being found without proper identification behind the lines of the Russian front.[69] In addition to recounting his experiences in Russia with John Reed, the book also covers his journey to Egypt, his marriage to Eve, and their voyage along the Danube River to the Black Sea aboard his ketch named *Flame*. Negley Farson embarked on his journey from Rotterdam, traveling upstream along the Rhine River and connecting to the Danube via the Ludwig Canal, which links these rivers through the River Main. Eve Stoker, affectionately referred to as "Crew" by Farson, participated in several adventures with him, notably the 1925 expedition

[68] See Kathryn Billington, "Eve Farson – Better Than Any Man," *Discover History, The Blog of the American Heritage Center* https://ahcwyo.org/2024/07/08/eve-farson-better-than-any-man/, accessed May 15, 2024.

[69] Negley Farson, *The Way of a Transgressor. The Autobiography of Negley Farson* (1935) (Devon: Edward Gaskell Publishers, 1999), 141.

on the Danube, during which she captured all the photographs subsequently included in the volumes *Sailing Across Europe* (1926) and *The Way of a Transgressor* (autobiography, 1936). Negley Farson's narrative of their Danube expedition along the Romanian borders, complemented with Eve Stoker's photographs, provides one of the most authentic portrayals of Romania:

> My bid to get on the foreign staff of the *Chicago Daily News* was that I would show another, and perhaps more realistic face of Europe than could be seen in the capitals. Beginning at Rotterdam, I intended to sail across Europe. I would buy my own boat; my wife would be the sole crew; we might take, six, eight months, even a year over the job. I would end up where the yellow Danube poured into the Black Sea from Roumania. I would write what I saw.[70]

His journalistic background has equipped him to take full advantage of his writing opportunities, as he served as the international and London correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News*, positioning him among the distinguished group of American journalists who adeptly cover Europe.

As he and his wife continued their journey across Europe, they increasingly sensed they were crossing the "invisible lines" of nationalism and animosity, creating vulnerabilities hindering future negotiations to maintain peace in the region. He likely referred to Wilsonian principles used for peace negotiations to conclude World War I, often implemented arbitrarily.

> Austria was like entering a house of mourning, whose occupants were trying to murder each other: the 'Hackenkreutzers' (sic!)[71] at the Communists' throats. […] Bavaria was full of *wandervogel* trying to walk away, to Hungary, to Roumania, to Turkey – trying to walk out of this world. […] That invisible line. Wherever we touched it in Czecho-Slovakia we

[70] Ibid, 421.

[71] The Hakenkreuzlers are anti-Semite organizations in post-war Europe, using swastika as symbol of their extremism, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Hakenkreuzler, accessed July 25, 2016.

> were arrested at once: everyone suspected everyone else – it was a new-born country, just given the lines of a frontier, and it was afraid to let anyone cross them. [...] Hungary, reduced to a third of its size, had a motto: 'No! No! NEVER! – that we heard at every turn.' [...] Inside the invisible lines that held the kingdoms of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes we found them plotting to assassinate each other, so that they could have separate frontier lines around themselves.[72]

Farson attributed this occurrence to the haphazard way the borders were delineated during the peace accords. As per him, these borders were so absurd that even countries with ardent animosity towards each other were compelled to acknowledge the existence of ten-mile-wide neutral zones along these lines to allow normal functioning of life.[73]

Farson illustrated Romania's post-war frontiers as "invisible lines" whose sometimes uneven demarcation could spark enduring disputes.

> That invisible line. Where the Treaty of Trianon had been imposed we found villages where the houses of the people were in Hungary and the railway station a few yards off was in Roumania. Hungarians had to go back country forty miles to find another railway station for their town. The power plant for the electric lights of a factory would be in Roumania, and the factory in Hungary and therefore silent. Rivers which began in one country were having their courses diverted, so that they would not flow through to the enemy across that invisible line. A peasant's home would be in one country and his cattle's grazing-fields in another. He had to take his passport with him before he attempted to enter his own fields. These lines had been drawn in all seriousness by a commission of supposedly intelligent Allied officers. Yet they were so patently absurd that even countries who hated each other were being forced to recognise ten-mile-wide neutral belts along such lines so that life could conduct itself.[74]

He took immense pride in his journalistic pursuits, leading him on global journeys. He interviewed Gandhi in India and met Roosevelt at the White House and Hitler in Germany during the dictator's rise to power:

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[72] Farson, *The Way of a Transgressor*, 322.

[73] Ibid, 223.

[74] Ibid, 438–9.

> I watched the world come to bits. […] I talked with Dictators, I shot the great fin-whale with the dean of Norwegian gunners, I sat with Gandhi under his mango tree at Karadi, and I went up to Lossiemouth, to talk with Ramsay MacDonald. […] I made a trip back to my own country, to sit with the strikers, listen to the wails of my taxable friends, talk with the drought-stricken farmers and cowboys of the Dakotas, to see if America was really getting a new sense of values under Roosevelt. I talked with Roosevelt in the White House and had a private view of John Dillinger, naked on the slab, after he had been shot. I watched Stalin review the Red Army in the Red Square.[75]

In 1926, he published a portrayal of his 1925 Danube voyage in the volume titled *Sailing Across Europe*.[76] Romania lacks a uniform portrayal, except for the homogenous populations residing along the Danube shore. As they neared the area, they were awed by the remnants of Roman presence. They traversed the Banat region, which had been partitioned between Romania and Serbia following the war: "This part of the world to-day, he observed, is an ethnographic museum, and one shudders to think of the peace conference that was daring enough to figure it out."[77]

After exploring Turnu-Severin, where "the atmosphere was – Europe, badly in need of repair, model French," Farson made an ironic statement: "The Romanians refuse to be Balkan. They speak of their country as being south-eastern Europe – 'an island of Latins in a sea of Slavs.'"[78] French influence could be recognized in fashion and manners, but it needed improvement:

> In Turnu-Severin we saw dandified officers in French blue with painted cheeks and red lips. (Be it noted in the Roumanian Army no one below the rank of major is permitted to use cosmetics.) Most of the crowd in the street wore western clothes, or what had been sold as such, and the cafes were not littered with peasants. But the cafes were dirty, the streets were

[75] Ibid, 466.
[76] Idem, *Sailing across Europe* (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1926).
[77] Ibid, 178–9.
[78] Ibid, 211.

> poorly lighted, and the whole place seemed down-at-heel. The atmosphere was Europe, badly in need of repair, model French.[79]

They strolled along Calea Victoriei, famed as the "Fifth Avenue of Bucharest," and enjoyed a meal at Capsa's, renowned as "one of the most and best restaurants in Europe."[80] After returning to their ship, they continued their journey through the Dobrudja region, reaching the Danube Delta and, finally, the Black Sea. They also made side trips to the "forbidden Bessarabia."[81] They faced the prejudices embedded in their minds by previous visitors:

> We had been warned against the Roumanians as we had been against the [82]natives of each successive country since leaving Holland, and went ashore well fortified with passport and letters. As usual, the warning was calumny. A polite little official barely glanced through our papers and told us that we could lie off Omoldova. He seemed strangely preoccupied, which we understood later, as he was arrested that evening for taking bribes to pass contraband. He had been doing this systematically for three years, and had kept a book of the names of the people with whom he had divided the spoils. The discovery of this had cast a gloom over the official circles of Omoldova. And the Government spy would not divide!

During the 1930s, American correspondents in Europe observed the unwavering stance of the Continent towards an impending world war. John Gunther was a highly acclaimed American journalist working overseas at that time. From 1924 to 1936, he served as a correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News*. During this time, he reported from many cities, including London, Berlin, Vienna, Moscow, and Paris. Inspired by the positive reception of his book *Inside Europe*, Gunther left his journalism job and focused on authoring his *Inside …* travel book collection.[83] *Inside*

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[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid, 239.

[81] Ibid, 267.

[82] Ibid, 179.

[83] "John Gunther," *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Gunther, accessed June 22, 2024.

Europe underwent multiple revised versions from 1933 until 1938. The Gestapo banned the book in Germany in 1937 due to its two chapters that examined the "psychopathology of dictators," with one part specifically focusing on Hitler's ascent to power and the potential consequences of his ambitions in Europe.[84] In addition, he gained prominence as a renowned radio commentator across Europe while working for the National Broadcasting Company from 1938 until the onset of World War II in the autumn of 1939. He compiled his broadcasts into the book titled *The High Cost of Hitler*, which was published in 1939. At first, he planned to create a series titled *Inside Europe Revisited*, consisting of his journey diaries from Paris, Berlin, Danzig, Warsaw, Moscow, London, and several neutral capitals. However, the events that took place in 1939 had a profound impact on him. Gunther had indeed published a book in 1932 titled *Not to Be Repeated: Merry-Go-Round of Europe*. This book consisted of travel memoirs and correspondence from various countries, including Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Russia, Central Europe (which comprises Romania), and Switzerland. Gunther also included a revised sequence called *Inside Europe*. In the introduction of "Not to Be Repeated," Gunther analyzed the contrasting American perceptions of Europe. On the one hand, Europe was seen as a place "filled with masterpieces of art and the learning of the ages," but on the other hand, it was described as "a madhouse more ga-ga than any other spot in the topsy-turvy world of the moment."[85] He expressed skepticism about American participation in Europe's post-World War I reconstruction efforts. The United States showed dissatisfaction with the outcomes, following its efforts to "save Europe" and set up a secure democracy after "having poured into it

[84] See "Gestapo Bans John Gunther's 'Inside Europe,'" *JTA. Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, January 28, 1937, https://www.jta.org/archive/gestapo-bans-john-gunthers-inside-europe, accessed August 2, 2024.

[85] [John Gunther], *Not to Be Repeated. Merry-Go-Round of Europe* (New York: Ray Long & Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1932), VII.

some sixteen billion dollars during and after the war." For him, America's error was "to view it through American spectacles made more opaque by British fog." America had yet to comprehend that Europe adhered to its established principles and behaviors, rooted in centuries of progress.[86]

Gunther contended that Europe was perceived as a distinct and separate entity for most Americans, akin to the concept of "Latin America." Nonetheless, he concluded that "Europe's most characteristic feature, and the first cause of all its issues and phenomena, is the great diversity of its population."[87] Gunther's analysis suggested that American intervention in European affairs hindered Europe's ability to restore its balance by following its own principles and practices.[88] The twenty-page chapter on Romania, titled "Those amorous Rumanians," portrayed a theatrical backdrop for Balkan royalty and political schemes, evoking the essence of "Ruritania and Zenda."[89] Gunther presented Queen Marie, the British royalty who had arrived in this country approximately four decades ago, referring to Romania's unsophisticated, uneducated, and visibly uncultured population. For Gunther, the relationships between Queen Marie and Carol would undoubtedly "form an interesting Freudian study."[90] He stated that she transformed Romania from a rather ridiculous Balkan semi-principality into a much larger country with abundant natural resources, which held significant political significance in Europe. Moreover, he believed that Queen Marie employed "petticoat diplomacy" to establish

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[86] Ibid, VIII.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid, IX.

[89] Ibid, 420. See the information regarding Western perceptions of the Balkans and the use of Ruritarian analogies for more specific details: Vesna Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania. The Imperialism of the Imagination* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1998); Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 2009.

[90] Gunther, *Not to Be Repeated*, 421.

a network of marital alliances with other European royal houses to enhance Romania's power and influence.[91]

Gunther's primary focus was on the love lives of the Romanian royalty, specifically those of King Ferdinand and Elena Văcărescu, as well as King Carol II and his romantic partners, Zizi Lambrino and Elena Lupescu. In addition, he provided an abundance of specific information regarding royal conspiracies and tactical maneuvers. The Romanian chapter in *Inside Europe* is entitled "Carol, Lupescu, and Rumania" and focuses on the connection between King Carol and Elena Lupescu, exploring its impact on Romanian political life. The chapter spans 15 pages. Gunther's speech alternated between gentle irony and satire. At the beginning of his book, he presented a satirical depiction of Romania through the legend of a European map: "Rumania: isn't as Zenda-esque as its flamboyant reputation. A friend of France, it flirts with Germany." The country's portrayal comprehensively combined his opinions regarding Romanian politics. In contrast to his earlier book, Gunther presented several insights into the evolution of the extreme right and the emergence of the Iron Guard, established by Corneliu Codreanu and referred to as the "Legion of the Archangel Michael." Gunther labeled its program as:

> […] a fanatic, obstreperous sub-Fascism on a strong nationalist and anti-Semitic basis. Its members, trooped through the countryside, wore white costumes, carried burning crosses, impressed the ignorant peasantry, aroused the students in the towns, Presently, he specified, its enrolled strength was two hundred men.[92]

For Gunther, the movement gained political momentum following the rise of Hitlerism in the Reich, but it was forced to divide after assassinating Prime Minister I.G. Duca in 1933. He depicted Iuliu Maniu, the leader of the National Peasant Party, with an unforeseen sense of

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[91] Ibid, 424–4.

[92] Idem, *Inside Europe* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1940), 446.

sympathy, which was unwelcome to the Bucharest authorities since he was portrayed as an anti-hero in a Balkan comedy.[93] His portrayal revealed unexpected sympathy, undesirable to the Bucharest officials as an anti-hero in a Balkan comedy: "one of the finest characters in all the Balkans, in fact in all Europe, and certainly the most distinguished citizen of Romania." He was "ascetic, incorruptible, stately, devout." Maniu, who originated from a Transylvanian lineage of peasants, had "no interest in women, in money, or in personal power," he was "that rare thing, a Rumanian patriot for Rumania's sake."[94]

Gunther then met another politician, Nicolae Titulescu, the former foreign minister, whom he found noteworthy. Titulescu was renowned as "the best communicator in the Balkans" and was the only person in Romania trusted by the "French general staff." As Gunther stated, he was "torrentially voluble in half a dozen languages," and his "wit and unquenchable vivacity" were "famous all over Europe." He was "the No. 2 on the death list of the Iron Guard," and he had "twice been president of the League of Nations Assembly." In 1923, "president of both the Little Entente and the Balkan Entente." To put it differently, he was a "Diplomat De Luxe."[95] In Gunther's opinion, Romania's susceptibility to communism was primarily due to its Balkan underdevelopment, except for the leaders described above.

In this same Ruritanian setting, Gunther published his book *Behind Europe's Curtain* in 1949, where he concluded:

> Communism had a particularly soft and ready field in Rumania. There comes a time when even Zenda must get down to facts and figures, Feudalism; laws which made trade unionism a crime; royal scandals; no tradition of decency in the public administration; a debauched judiciary; political apathy by the educated; fantastic displays of overt luxury by a

[93] Ibid, 446–7.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid, 451.

> fat crust of rich – all this existed and it played straight into Ana Pauker's accomplished hand.[96]

There was a thin dividing line in Gunther's Balkanist discourse between a democrat's aversion towards aristocratic or monarchic political systems and a communist's anti-bourgeois propaganda. Gunther's political beliefs are not debatable. It is arguable how an objective journalist's discourse turns into propaganda. His friend, the controversial communist and pro-Soviet American *New York Times* correspondent Walter Duranty, is the likely culprit. The influence is particularly evident in Gunther's *Inside Europe* chapters regarding Stalin and Duranty, who were regarded as prominent figures in politics and journalism.[97] Gunther's book revolved around two centers of gravity. First, Hitler's malignant personality was psycho-analyzed in the opening chapters. Secondly, the closing chapters revealed his bias, describing Stalin's powerful and honest character. Hitler and Stalin were, in his view, the makers of the new world, where evil was counterbalanced by good.

Duranty, who served as Gunther's tutor in Soviet politics, also shaped his critique of European aristocracy and royalty, portraying them as remnants of Balkanism. Walter Duranty, an Anglo-American journalist, was the Moscow bureau chief for *The New York Times* between 1922 and 1936 after the Bolsheviks emerged victorious in the Russian Civil War (1917–1923). For nearly two decades, his writings dominated the front page of *The New York Times*, providing attractive coverage of the consequences of the Russian Revolution.[98] He was a clever, charming,

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[96] Gunther, *Behind Europe's Curtain* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1949), 122.

[97] Idem, *Inside Europe,* see chapters: "Stalin" (516–35), "Men around Stalin" (536–51), "The Russian Trials" (552–61), and "Duranty's Inferno" (562–75).

[98] Walter Duranty's pro-Soviet books include *The Curious Lottery and Other Tales of Russian Justice* (New York: Coward–McCann, 1929); *Red Economics* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1932); *Duranty Reports Russia* (New York: The Viking Press, 1934); *I Write As I Please* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1935); *The Kremlin and the People* (New

mischievous person with a showy way of living. He was most responsible for getting the U.S. to acknowledge the Soviet dictatorship. He was also the journalist who had foreseen the triumph of the Bolshevik state while everyone else believed it would fail. However, according to S.J. Taylor's revealing book, Walter Duranty played a significant part in spreading some of the most significant falsehoods in history:

Throughout his career, Duranty claimed that his only objective as a journalist was "to find the truth and write it as best I could." Yet despite this high-minded goal, by 1957, the year of his death, Duranty would be labeled "the No. 1 Soviet apologist in the United States." In the following years, he would become the prototype for the dishonest reporter: described by his peers as a "fashionable liar" or a "journalistic shill."[99]

In 1932, Duranty was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for a series of reports on the Soviet Union, eleven of which were published in June 1931. However, he faced later criticism for denying the existence of widespread famine (1930–1933) in the USSR, particularly the Holodomor. Since 1990, there have been demands for the Pulitzer board to withdraw Duranty's prize. In 2003, the board decided not to revoke the award, stating that the articles they reviewed did not provide "clear and convincing evidence of deliberate deception."[100]

The influence of Balkanism as an identity discourse continued to be noticeable in American war reports regarding Romania between the late 1930s and early 1940s. However, the turmoil in Central and Eastern Europe overshadowed the tragicomic portrayals of the Balkans in American

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York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1941); *USSR: The Story of Soviet Russia* (New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1944); *Stalin & Co.: The Politburo, The Men Who Run Russia* (New York: W. Sloane Associates, 1949).

[99] See S. J. Taylor, *Stalin's Apologist: Walter Duranty: The New York Times's Man in Moscow* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

[100] See "Statement on Walter Duranty's 1932 Prize," *The Pulitzer Prizes*, *News*, November 21, 2003, https://www.pulitzer.org/news/statement-walter-duranty, accessed July 12, 2024.

journalists' writings. Ruritania was gradually losing its aura of operetta. Cyrus Leo Sulzberger, Harvard University graduate, Pulitzer Prize winner, and Chief European correspondent for *The New York Times,* fondly reminisced about his experiences in the exotic Balkans during 1940–1941:

> It is, or was, a gay peninsula filled with sprightly people who ate peppered foods, drank strong liquors, wore flamboyant clothes, loved and murdered easily and had a splendid talent for starting wars. Less imaginative Westerners looked down on them with secret envy, sniffing at their royalty, scoffing at their pretensions and fearing their savage terrorists.[101]

During his travels, the American journalist came to "know their kings and communists" and "to love their princesses and their dancing girls." He became fluent in three of their languages, "accompanied four of their armies," "was expelled from two countries and fled two others before advancing Nazi hordes." There, he was "bombed, bullied, coddled, arrested and arrested and enticed" and concluded that in "the Balkans, I left part of my soul and found my wife."[102] Coming from Turkey via Budapest, Sulzberger arrived in Bucharest, a "delightfully depraved" city where he decided to wait for the inevitable war.[103] He found traces of Balkan undemocratic kings in Romania, in King Carol II, who had already abdicated at the time of his report. Again, the anti-hero of this Balkan setting was the "upright, courageous Iuliu Maniu."[104]

Balkanist stereotypes seemed to be exacerbated by conflict, resulting in disintegration, primitivism, brutality, and a bellicose mentality, characteristics attributed to the Balkan nations. In March 1940, *Associated*

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[101] Cyrus Leo Sulzberger, *A Long Row of Candles. Memoirs, Diaries 1934–1954* (London: MacMillan, 1969), 89. His family owned the *New York Times.* He worked as a foreign correspondent during the 1940s and 1950s. He was a Pulitzer Prize winner in 1951. He confessed in his book that "My origins are American, middle class and Jewish." Ibid, 17.

[102] Ibid, 89.

[103] Ibid, 91.

[104] Ibid, 92.

Press correspondent Robert St. John stated that Anglo-American observers had mostly misrepresented Romania as an archetypal Ruritarian nation:

> Few places in the world have been so lampooned by British and American writers as Rumania. For years it was the mode to set musical comedies and light operas in a laughable Balkan country called, not too subtly, "Ruritania." As with all extremes of praise or censure, these characterizations were at least partly false.[105]

While Romania's oversimplified representation abroad has obscured its strategic initiatives and economic importance, changes in spheres of influence emphasized these aspects within the changing pragmatic US interests.

Conclusion

From an imagological standpoint, American correspondents persistently portrayed Romania against the backdrop of the two World Wars. The significance of this country resided in its strategic, diplomatic, and economic importance within the new configuration of spheres of influence, where the USA had diverse pragmatic interests. The crucial aspect is that Romania was revealed to the Americans as a European nation, exerting significant endeavors to align with modern international politics. The extensive collection of American war reports encompassed Romania also demonstrates the progressive development of more stable American-Romanian relations.

[105] Robert St. John, *Foreign Correspondent* (New York: Doubleday & CO, 1957), 77–78.

2. *Vestiges of the Old Order.* American Correspondents Reporting on Identity Negotiations in Transylvania

This chapter examines the representation of identity negotiations in Transylvania by American war journalist Leigh White from 1939 to early 1941.[1] Focusing on the partition of Transylvania, catalyzed by the Vienna Award on August 30, 1940, it applies the concept of identity negotiations, a standard tool in psychology for examining interactions between American reporters' identity representations and their social contacts with Romanian people and various minorities. It also explores how historical realities either aligned with or contradicted these self-representations and the intended goals of these interactions.[2] Ray Moseley, an experienced war correspondent, provided a detailed account of this significant epoch in Romania's history:

> A drama played out in Romania in 1939 and 1940 involved the partial dismemberment of the country, the forced abdication of the king and German occupation. The protagonists were King Carol II and his implacable enemies, the fascist and anti-Semite Iron Guard.[3]

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[1] See Carmen Andraș, "Identity Negotiations: American War Correspondent Leigh White and the Partition of Transylvania (1939–1940)," *Anuarul Institutului de Cercetări Socio-Umane "Gheorghe Șincai" al Academiei Române* 25 (2022): 169–90.

[2] See William B. Swann Jr. and Jennifer K. Bosson, "Identity Negotiation: A Theory of Self and Social Interaction," in *Handbook of Personality: Theory and Research,* eds. Oliver P. John, Richard W. Robins, and Lawrence A. Pervin, 3rd edn (New York: Guilford Press, 2008), 448–71.

[3] Ray Moseley, *Reporting War: How Foreign Correspondents Risked Capture, Torture and Death to Cover World War II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 22–23. Ray Moseley, a former *Chicago Tribune*, and *United Press International* foreign and war correspondent, is the author of *Reporting War, Mussolini's Shadow, Mussolini, the Last 600 Days of Il Duce*, and a memoir, *In Foreign Fields* (2010). A finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for

Moseley's description relied on the firsthand testimony of war correspondents from Anglo-American origins who were present at the scene: Cedric Salter[4] from London's *Daily Mail*; Paul Bettany from *Reuters*, James (Jim) E. Brown from the *International News Service* (INS); Edmond Taylor of the *Chicago Tribune* and Leigh White of the *New York Herald Tribune*. Moseley specifically highlighted September 21, 1939, as the pivotal moment of the incident, when Iron Guardists assassinated Prime Minister Armand Călinescu and stormed the Bucharest Radio building to announce his "execution." Mosely claimed the victims had been "overpowered by the police," forcibly taken to the location of the assassination, and subsequently killed by gunfire.[5] In the drama's second act on June 28, 1940, the Soviet Union and Germany plotted to destabilize Romania. Russia pressured Romania to withdraw from Bessarabia, a region that had previously belonged to Russia, and Bukovina, which had never been part of Russia. Two months later, Germany announced the transfer of a part of Transylvania to Hungary per the Vienna Award dated August 30, 1940. In the third act, Romania was engulfed in violent turmoil, characterized by widespread riots and clashes between the army and the Iron Guard. Antonescu faced significant challenges in resolving the conflict, ultimately leading to King Carol II's abdication in favor of Prince Michael on September 6, 1940, at Antonescu's request. The Bucharest Pogrom of Jews, initiated by the Iron Guard, reached its climax on January 21–23, 1941, resulting in the death of numerous Jewish people. It was the moment when the Germans took complete command.[6]

international reporting in 1982. See UNIVNEBPRESS, "From the Desks of Chris Dubbs and Ray Moseley: Reporting War and Controlling the News," University of Nebraska Press (UNP) Blog, December 28, 2017, https://unpblog.com/2017/12/28/from-the-desks-of-chris-dubbs-and-ray-moseley-reporting-war-and-controlling-the-news/, accessed July 27, 2024.

[4] See Cedric Salter, *Flight from Poland* (London: Faber & Faber, 1940).

[5] Moseley, *Reporting War*, 22.

[6] Ibid, 23.

In 1941, the American historian Charles Upson Clark provided a detailed summary of Romania's racial statistics and historical descriptions of its border regions, in connection to the Vienna Award. He expressed the belief that any long-term resolution to the unrest in Europe must consider and not underestimate the racial realities of the continent's persistent danger areas.[7] Identity negotiations were not possible in these "danger zones." During a time marked by the exaltation of power, a series of noteworthy events led Hungary to assert control over certain areas in Transylvania, enacting the Vienna Award. According to Clark, Romania was compelled to submit. In addition, Clark stated that the "Romanian intellectual elite, whose rights had been guaranteed by the Award," were "expelled" with extreme cruelty.[8]

Keith Hitchins, a renowned American historian and professor of Eastern European history at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, who specialized in Romania and its history, has determined that the Vienna Award heightened tensions in this region:

> Far from settling matters, the Vienna Award had exacerbated relations between Rumania and Hungary. It did not solve the nationality problem by separating all Magyars from all Rumanians. Some 1,150,000 to 1,300,000 Rumanians, or 48 per cent to over 50 per cent of the population of the ceded territory, depending upon whose statistics are used, remained north of the new frontier, while about 500,000 Magyars (other Hungarian estimates go as high as 800,000, Rumanian as low as 363,000) continued to reside in the south. The restrictions on political activities, impediments to education and culture in the national language, and ethnic discrimination in economic life imposed by both governments added to the bitterness.[9]

According to historian Nicolae Dascălu, the American correspondents accredited in Romania documented and described the circumstances

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[7] Charles Upson Clark, *Racial Aspects of Romania's Case* (New York: Caxton Press, 1941), X.

[8] Ibid, IX.

[9] Keith Hitchins, *Rumania, 1866–1947* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1994), 486.

surrounding the Vienna Award and its consequences. Based on the Romanian State Archives (The Foreign Press in Romania, 1940), he mentions a minimal number of American press agencies that were present in Romania during the summer of 1940 *United Press* (represented by F. E. Stevens), *Associated* Press (Al. Coller) and *Trans Radio Press Service* (I. Schnerr) and the newspapers: *New York Times, Christian Science Monitor, New York Herald Tribune, Chicago Tribune and Newsweek.* Their presence in Romania was more substantial, as their reports in articles and books imply. Dascălu discovered a small list of American correspondents who visited Romania in July and August of 1940 at the Romanian State Archives. These correspondents were likewise interested in the connections between Romania and Hungary: Dorothy Thompson from the *New York Herald Tribune*, F. O'Brien from the *Hearst Group*, W. Duranty from the *New York Post* (in reality, *The New York Times*), Sigrid Schultz from the *Chicago Tribune*, and Edmund Stevens from the *United Press* (in fact, from the *Christian Science Monitor*).[10]

Notable American correspondents in Romania at the time were the *Newsweek* representative, Countess Waldeck, and Henry Gorrell from the *United Press.* The firsthand witness, American correspondent Leigh White from the *New York Herald Tribune*'s Paris office, also observed those momentous events.[11] He provided coverage of the Spanish Civil War in 1937, and between 1938 and 1939, he reported from the Balkans.[12] In July 1939, he came back to the United States. During that period, The *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* was seeking a reporter of "Aryan" descent, namely someone who could raise awareness about the dramatic situation of

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[10] Nicolae Dascălu, "Dictatul de la Viena în viziune americană," in *Relații Româno-Americane în timpurile moderne,* ed. Gheorghe I. Florescu (Iași: Editura Universității „Al. I. Cuza,," 1993), 241.

[11] Leigh White, *The Long Balkan Night* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944).

[12] See Mitchel P. Roth, *Historical Dictionary of War Journalism*, ed. James Stuart Olson (Westport CN and London: Greenwood Press, 1997), 342.

Jews in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Germany. The previous person in this position had recently quit because he was disappointed with the lack of success in his mission. The Germans had no desire to reveal their violent crimes against the Jews.[13] It was, therefore, hopeless to assign the task to another "Judeo-American" or a "Gentile" or non-Israelite person to Europe even if they could obtain a German visa.[14] The establishment of the *Overseas News Agency* was motivated by the challenge of providing information on the "persecuted minorities of Europe." The strategy seemed logical. However, the ambiguous nature of the two organizations combined into one (ONA-JTA) created considerable challenges for any mission, particularly for a lone correspondent of Arian descent, specifically Leigh White, in a German-dominated Europe.[15] White accepted the assignment due to his eagerness to resume military action and apparent suitability for the task. He was a young man with distinct Aryan features, a polyglot with blond hair and, as his name suggests, a fair complexion. With a German visa, White faced a complex travel itinerary involving several "forbidden cities." He intended to go from Vienna and Prague to Berlin, then to Lodz, Lvoff (sic!), and Warsaw in occupied Poland. He then planned to visit Kaunas and Vilna in Soviet Lithuania. [16]

Both Germany and the Soviet Union exhibited excessive caution regarding international reporters. White devoted several chapters to the Romanian cities he visited: Bucharest (2 chapters), Kolozhvar-Cluj (1 chapter) and numerous pages to the cession of Transylvania in advantage of Hungary and the consequences of this historical choice.

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[13] White, *The Long Balkan Night*, 1.

[14] Ibid, 2.

[15] Ibid. The president of the *Overseas News Agency (ONA)* was Jacob Blaustein, a director of the Pan American Petroleum and Transport Company, its vice-president was George Backer, at that time the publisher of the *New York Post,* its secretary and manager, Jacob Landau, former manager of *The Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA).*

[16] Ibid, 6.

According to Henry Gorrell, an American correspondent, Budapest was considered an "Axis playground and center of German-Italian espionage." [17] It was intended for White to set up his headquarters there. He found solace in this location, which provided a secure refuge in times of distress. It also served as a conducive environment for him to compose his writings on the "Jewish situation" in Hungary and Romania and his broader series of essays on the Balkans. As he had to travel through Rome on his way to Hungary, he had the chance to report on events in Italy. He could continue his journey from Budapest to Berlin and Warsaw by passing through Vienna and Prague.[18] If German censorship became stricter, White was expected to return to Budapest and accurately report on developments in Axis Europe. He could not deal directly with the press associations and was instructed to primarily send materials via mail, reserving cable and radio facilities for urgent or exclusive items. He had to separate from his wife in Italy because her Spanish citizenship rendered her Republican passport invalid. [19] White tried to comprehend and show empathy for the people he encountered whenever he could describe them. On the brink of war in the spring of 1940, Rome was akin to a "city of the living dead." It seemed that everyone was affected by a form of spiritual forgetfulness, including the Americans who endeavored to disregard fascism and maintain a relatively autonomous social life within their group.[20]

White contemplated Hungary's historical events, political landscape, and international affairs during his train voyage to Budapest. He believed interwar Hungary could be described as a predominantly "reactionary" political system. From 1919, following the ouster of Béla Kun, until 1941,

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[17] Henry Tilton Gorrell, *Soldier of the Press: Covering the Front in Europe and North Africa, 1936–1943*, ed. Kenneth Gorrell, vol. 1 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2009), 71.

[18] White, *The Long Balkan Night*, 6.

[19] Ibid, 7.

[20] Ibid, 10.

when the Gestapo took over the Ministry of Interior, every official action taken by Hungary was either detrimental or regressive. Since the signing of the Treaty of Trianon in 1920 to the occupation of Northern Transylvania, Hungary has vehemently opposed the restricted borders that resulted in the loss of two-thirds of its former territories and 60% of its former population. This opposition is summarized by the phrase "Nem, nem, sohá" (meaning "No, no, never!"). The fact that about 70 percent of the previous residents were Romanians, Slovaks, Ukrainians, Serbs, and Croats did not significantly affect the Magyar irredentists. They openly desired to regain control of everything, regardless of whether they had any legitimate claim to it or not. [21]

Leigh White believed Wilson's compromises were instrumental in causing those catastrophic events. The American reporter referenced Harold Nicolson, a multifaceted British figure involved in politics, diplomacy, history, writing, and journalism.[22] Nicolson thought that Wilson had abandoned his Four Principles by failing to emphasize that any territorial agreements should prioritize the well-being of the affected populations rather than being driven by the competing interests of different states. White believed that Wilson sparked territorial disputes that were exploited by figures like Hitler, Mussolini, and Horthy instead of being remembered as a statesman who eradicated the last relics of the old order. These disputes led to the destruction of both positive and negative aspects of the post-Versailles order in Europe.[23]

According to White, Hungary was challenging the Treaty of Trianon due to its perceived injustices, whether genuine or imagined. They desired more than simply adequate reparations and a simple rewriting of the

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[21] Ibid, 14–15.

[22] Ibid, 17–18.

[23] See Harold Nicolson, *Peacemaking 1919* (London: Constable, 1933), 181, quoted in White, *The Long Balkan Night*, 17.

treaty. Their true objective was restoring Hungary's imperial borders fully and dismantling Greater Romania, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia.[24] During his time in Budapest, White extensively reported on the status of the Jews using direct contacts and interviews, with minimal interference from Hungarian officials.[25]

On June 27, 1940, the Soviet Union issued an ultimatum to Romania, demanding Bessarabia's immediate surrender. White then informed Jacob Landau, the *Overseas News Agency* (ONA) manager, about the news and promptly departed for Bucharest.[26] White found Romania in turmoil following Russia's demand for the cession of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina.[27] White's crisis evaluation was based on direct observation and careful documentation of the historical and political context, primarily focusing on the prevalence of anti-Semitism and related activities. He expressed a keen interest in the overall situation in Romania, particularly the dramatic events occurring in Transylvania. However, he was faced with censorship from both the Romanian government for Jewish-related topics and his American superiors for problems relating to Transylvania.[28] White attempted unsuccessfully to write a series of articles for the Overseas News Agency (ONA) about the antisemitic outbursts in Romania and the involvement of the Iron Guard in criminal actions against Jews.

He faced challenges due to the strict antisemitic Romanian censorship. He considered it vital to travel again to Budapest to share his messages, remaining undeterred by the difficulties he faced. The Hungarians and Bulgarians, influenced by Russia's takeover of Bukovina and Bessarabia, were starting to demand the surrender of Transylvania and Dobruja,

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24 White, *The Long Balkan Night*, 17–18.
25 Ibid, 21.
26 Ibid, 46–8.
27 Ibid, 51.
28 Ibid, 53.

respectively. The "incidents" at the Hungarian borders hindered his return to Bucharest.[29]

Once the Romanian authorities discovered that he was an undercover correspondent for *The Jewish Telegraphic Agency* and not a reporter focused on broad minority issues, his safety in Romania became compromised. He knew he could be forced to leave the country at any moment. To evade Romanian censorship, he communicated with Landau through letters delivered via the "diplomatic pouch." However, Landau continued to reject any other subjects. Every time White addressed the Transylvanian issue, specifically the "political and economic infiltration of the Germans," or any other subject, he would consistently receive a radio scolding without delay.[30]

White faced considerable obstacles from Romanian censorship when addressing antisemitism, as his statements were often distorted.[31] A strategy was developed to hide any information related to antisemitism in the international news coverage of Romania. This method proved effective, as even Serge Lecca, the chief censor historically linked to the Iron Guard and a supporter of Nichifor Crainic, could not eliminate such content.

Danger Zones of Propaganda

Remarkably, on August 8, 1940, the First Secretary of American Legation informed Leigh White that the Propaganda Ministry, headed by Nichifor Crainic, had requested his "expulsion" on the grounds of being a Jewish agent writing unfavorable articles about the "new regime."[32] A week later,

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[29] Ibid, 54–55.
[30] Ibid, 75.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid, 78.

the Propaganda Ministry unexpectedly invited him on a guided tour to Transylvania, specifically arranged to influence "neutral" journalists, particularly those from America.

According to White, Nichifor Crainic understood that, despite differing opinions on the Gigurtu administration, all Americans would eventually support Romania and oppose Hungary in the Transylvanian conflict. White began his Transylvanian journey to Cluj by rail, just as his colleague American correspondent for *Newsweek* in Bucharest, Countess Rosa Goldschmidt Waldeck, also known as Rosie Waldeck. Upon arriving in Cluj, White's initial observations were of a densely populated settlement with a population of 105,000 individuals. The community consisted of 40,000 Hungarians, 35,000 Romanians, 20,000 Jews who had adopted Hungarian culture, and 10,000 Germans. It is situated in the valley of the Little Someș River amidst forested hills. While the new Romanian Orthodox Cathedral stood out in size compared to the other buildings in the city, most of the architecture displayed evident characteristics of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. These included "rococo 'palaces' and toasted yellow barnlike government buildings with sloping tiled roofs." He described the city systematically, addressing its historical, architectural, cultural, and ethnic aspects. White's every comment during his visit to Cluj was carefully selected to validate the information acquired through documents. He stated that the city was called "Klausenbürg" in German and was settled by Saxons in the 12th century and that the only notable building there was the 15th-century Gothic Church of St Michael.[33]

The historic capital of the principality of Transylvania, Großfürstentum, showcased the region's diverse multinational and multireligious character. White observed that the Romanians, Hungarians, and Germans, each regarded Transylvania as uniquely belonging to them. He concluded that

[33] Ibid, 79.

Transylvania's identity resulted from contributions from all three ethnic groups.[34]

Disregarding the 1930 *General Census of the Romanian Population*,[35] most likely to maintain objectivity, he used the average of the ethnographic statistics compiled by British historians Robert William Seton-Watson in his book *History of the Roumanians* (Cambridge, 1934) and Carlile Aylmer Macartney in *Hungary and Her Successors 1919–1937* (Oxford, 1937). These statistics were biased towards the Romanian and Hungarian perspectives.

White defined Transylvania from an ethnographical perspective as "an inland sea of Rumanian peasants (2,825,000 of them)," "dotted with urban archipelagoes of Magyars and Magyarized Jews (1,300,000 Magyars; 350,000 Jews)" and "scattered islands of Germans (Swabs and Saxons, 550,000 in all)." His estimates of numerical values render the material up for debate. He failed to specify the census data, the year, and the place of publication. This time, his assertions rely heavily on subjective interpretations, such as the broad portrayal of the Romanian people as rural and peasant. The figures provided do not align with those found in Watson's appendix on "the racial distribution in Transylvania and the neighboring counties of Hungary at the last pre-war Hungarian census (1910)." There is a considerable time gap between the 1910 census and the 1940 figures. According to the 1910 census, the total population in all Romanian counties of the former Hungary consisted of 2,909,300 Romanians, 1,140,670 Hungarians, and 498,877 Germans. [36]

Similarly, Carlile Aylmer Macartney's samples from the 1910 Hungarian census also support this fact.[37] The 1930 Census, issued by

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[34] Ibid, 79–80.

[35] Sabin Manuilă, ed., *Recensământul general al populației României din 29 decembrie 1930: neam, limba maternă,* religie, vol. 2 (Bucharest: Editura Institutului Central de Statistică, 1940).

[36] White, *The Long Balkan Night*, 79–80.

[37] Carlile Aylmer Macartney, *Hungary and Her Successors 1919–1937* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937), 246–5.

the Central Institute of Statistics, reported the following population figures for Transylvania, Banat, Crișana, and Maramureș: 3,207,880 Romanians, 1,353,276 Hungarians, and 543,852 Germans.[38] Without providing any information on the sources, time frame, or specific location, White asserted that either the entire country of Romania or just the region of Transylvania had a predominantly Orthodox population. He acknowledged the presence of several Romanians affiliated with the Greek Catholic Church, which he briefly characterized as a "schism within a schism." He noted that the priests of this church had beards, were allowed to marry, and followed the Byzantine liturgy while also showing a certain level of respect for the Pope in Rome.[39] The 1930 census reveals that inside the Carpathian arc, the region was predominantly inhabited by Orthodox believers, although the distribution varied between the provinces of Transylvania, Banat, Crișana, and Maramureș.[40]

White concluded with a sharp and contemptuous remark that highlighted the American observer's failure to understand the importance of national and religious identity in the region:

> Treat this explosive hodge-podge with a mixture of revisionism and power politics and you have the 'Transylvanian problem' – a mess as insolvable as the 'Jewish problem', on which it impinges and which it so closely resembles.[41]

After savoring a widely available "chicken dinner at the Local Rotary Club," they traveled to Oradea in a "motor caravan." White, accompanied by his wife, Sam Brewer, an American correspondent from the *Chicago Tribune*,[42] and a Romanian detective with a "crossed eye," embarked on

[38] Manuilă, *Recensământul general*, 34.

[39] White, *The Long Balkan Night*, 80.

[40] Manuilă, *Recensământul general*, 77–80.

[41] White, *The Long Balkan Night*, 80.

[42] The article "The Reporter Captive in Libya," *The New York Times*, November 29, 1941, on page 2, announced that three correspondents "believed to have been captured by

a journey in a recently produced American DeSoto automobile built by Chrysler Corporation. The vehicle was driven by a chauffeur employed by the Ministry of Health.[43] The reporters only observed "the notorious Carol Line" from the speeding car. As they neared the Hungarian border, the driver had to halt multiple times to navigate the tank traps that obstructed the path. The barricades typically comprised six structures made of reinforced concrete, with three on each side of the road, overlapping in the center to resemble huge fangs. Enormous wood fortifications stretched out on both sides while a complex network of barbed wire entangled the surrounding trees and plants.[44]

The Carol Line, also known as the "Ligne Imaginesco" in Bucharest, was constructed by French military engineers based on General Maginot's medieval concept of an impregnable "line of fortifications-in-depth." This line was designed to halt both tank assaults and infantry attacks effectively. The plan was to extend the border wall from Czernowitz to the Danube, covering the entire Hungarian border. White concluded with irony that the possibility of airborne infantry, parachutists, and dive-bombers had been wholly disregarded. Due to the depletion of government money, the wall was left vulnerable and fell within a few months.[45]

White estimated that the efforts of hundreds of thousands of undernourished and poorly dressed Romanian soldiers were futile. They went to Oradea, Salonta, where the Romanian propaganda promptly suppressed any effort to imply Hungarian propaganda uniformly over the entirety of the Romanian border. No individuals encountered during their journey, whether Romanian or Hungarian authorities or civilians, instilled feelings

Axis forces In Libya were now known to be safe, the War Office announced tonight. They are Sam Brewer of the *Chicago Tribune,* Alaric Jacob of *Reuters*, *British news agency*, and M.H. Halton of the *Toronto Star*."

[43] White, *The Long Balkan Night*, 80.

[44] Ibid, 81.

[45] Ibid.

of happiness or security. In various nationalistic speeches, Romanian officials proposed a far-right concept known as the "transfer of populations" or resettlement based on ethnicity. This idea, which White supported in the Wilsonian tradition, aligned with a governmental strategy in 1941 to create ethnic homogeneity.[46]

> And all of us were prepared to grant the mayor's thesis: That, though there was a sizable Hungarian majority in Crishana, the majority of the people in Transylvania as a whole were Rumanians who wanted to continue being Rumanians; that, though a million and a quarter Hungarians might be unhappy under Rumanian rule, three million Rumanians in Transylvania would be still unhappier under Hungarian rule; that the only solution, given the existing system of frontiers, was a transfer of populations.[47]

In Carei, a town with a significant German minority, the German "Volksgruppen," which was established by Hitler in the ethnographic "islands" of German settlers in Eastern Europe, was described by the mayor of Carei as a "peaceful and industrious community." The mayor also stated that granting them autonomy was simply a reflection of the humanitarian goals of the Gigurtu government.[48] Two young men wearing khaki shorts were standing at the school gate. They immediately stood up straight and stared at the guests with intense enthusiasm, reminiscent of the fervor associated with the Nazi regime. The teacher, adorned in a black uniform that was a modified version of the traditional attire worn by Saxon peasants, confidently showcased the classrooms where he imparted lessons on "military strategy, target practice, and the 'Principles of National

[46] See Ioan Bolovan and Sorina Paula Bolovan, "Problemele demografice ale Transilvaniei între știință și politică (1920–1945): studiu de caz," ed. Camil Mureșanu, *Transilvania între medieval și modern* (Cluj Napoca: Centrul de Studii Transilvane, Fundația Culturală Română, 1996), 125–31; Viorel Achim, "The Romanian Population Exchange Project Elaborated by Sabin Manuilă in October 1941," *Annali Dell'Istituto Storico Italo-Germanico in Trento*, no. 27 (2001): 593–617, https://heyjoe.fbk.eu/index.php/anisig/article/download/2230/2230/2231, accessed August 24, 2024.

[47] White, *The Long Balkan Night*, 84.

[48] Ibid, 86.

Socialism.'" Subsequently, he invited the reporters to observe the young men in shorts, who swiftly performed coordinated drills to make a strong impression.[49]

White mentioned the one person inside the American reporters' group admired the display of nationalism: a woman of German-Jewish descent who had acquired citizenship by marriage to a count. The person in question, a journalist for *Newsweek*, was not explicitly identified by White, but it was undeniably Countess Waldeck. Others, like Henry Gorrell from the *United Press*, displayed disdain by turning their backs. Unluckily, Gorrell would encounter peril in Cluj during the August–September riots as the Hungarian occupying force, accompanied by their German allies, moved towards the west. Henry Gorrell was embroiled in the tumultuous unrest in Cluj when the crowd became boisterous. Gorrell released his bulldog, "Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines," and pursued him. He asked himself who would intend to shoot a man walking his dog.[50] Shortly after, he and Frank Stevens of the *United Press* discovered that German forces had invaded Romania under the pretext of a military mission in October 1940, outpacing their competition by 12 hours with the information.[51] Gorrell stated that "just as Stalin had hoodwinked Hitler by invading Finland," so had he "punched him in the gut in Bessarabia." In Gorrell's opinion, Germany's next movement had been to throw "Romania to the wolves, keeping its promise to the aristocracy of Hungary."[52] In August 1940, after the Germans handed over northern Transylvania to Hungary through the Vienna Award, the Gestapo incited riots in the region to compel Romanians to evacuate. Gorrell, like Lee White, witnessed the "uprooting of entire Romanian communities in Transylvania." A tragic

[49] Ibid, 86–87.
[50] Gorrell, *Soldier of the Press*, 77.
[51] See Moseley, *Reporting War*, 23.
[52] Gorrell, *Soldier of the Press*, 76.

scene occurred as civilians fled to Bucharest, entangled in riots incited by the Gestapo:

> It was a tragic spectacle, with women and children riding in ox-carts astride their hastily collected belongings, jamming King Carol's highways in the trek to Bucharest. Aided by the "German minority" in Transylvania, the Gestapo deliberately provoked rioting. Their work was so effective that the stampede westward couldn't have been more effective had Goering's Messerschmitts been pumping bullets into the backs of the withdrawing civilians as they had done in France.[53]

Gorrell encompassed these events within the framework of the German strategy regarding Romania's fate. The American journalist noted that Hitler's actions were deliberate. Upon resolving the Transylvanian issue in his way, he "gave signal for a coup d'état by Antonescu's green-shirted Iron Guard in Bucharest." Following King Carol's resignation, a Fascist regime assumed control in Bucharest. To address the Romanian army issue similarly and make it "without defense works," Hitler granted Bulgarian King Boris permission for his "German-trained troops" to push into Dobruja.[54]

Fascism was thus spreading all over Romania. On their tour, Leigh White witnessed a strange event at a kindergarten in Petrești. There, they encountered a girl reminiscent of the legendary Brunhild, who seemed to be instilling the "principles of National Socialism" in the minds of approximately twenty children aged between four and seven. Following the singing, the teacher summoned her most talented student, a girl, to deliver to them what appeared to be a form of "Nazi catechism."[55] The American correspondents spent a night in Satu Mare, left for Baia Mare and returned to Bucharest.

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[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid, 76–7.

[55] White, *The Long Balkan Night*, 87.

Consistent with Gorrell's views, White meticulously recorded the Vienna Award's historical context, providing further facts about its inception and implementation. According to White's dispatch from Bucharest, on August 29, Ion Gigurtu and Mihai Manoilescu received a summons to Vienna, specifically to the Belvedere palace, where they participated in a brief conference in the presence of Counts Teleki and Csáky, Von Ribbentrop, and Count Ciano. "Ribbentrop informed the Rumanians, White continued, that they must surrender not only Crishana but all of Northern Transylvania." Ribbentrop argued that the Hungarian army "was destined to fulfil its 'sacred mission' of defending the Carpathians."[56] King Carol II's efforts to postpone the operation were futile as the Hungarian army had already breached the Romanian border during the conference. The participants signed the document presented by Hitler's Chief of Protocol at precisely five o'clock in the morning on August 30th. This event took place in the Gold Room of Belvedere Palace.[57]

White extensively reported on the momentous events associated with the Vienna Award during his time in Budapest. He was then tasked with reporting on the takeover of Oradea Mare, which was known as Nagyvárad at the time. He worked alongside Cy Sulzberger of the *New York Times*, who had arrived from Belgrade. The expedition was arduous and perilous, among the deafening sounds of detonations and the apprehension of encountering unexploded ordnance left behind by the withdrawing Romanian military. However, the Hungarian residents in the villages they traveled through, considered "liberated," demonstrated their patriotism by dressing in their finest clothes and presenting white roses and red carnations.[58]

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[56] Ibid, 88–89.

[57] Ibid, 89.

[58] Ibid, 93.

On this occasion, the American correspondents joined a Hungarian propaganda convoy, accompanied by "several truckloads of Hungarian secret police who were doubtless also agents of the Gestapo." The remaining journalists represented the Axis powers, including Germans, Italians, Spaniards, and Japanese. The German officers were escorted by a crowd assembled along the road, who greeted them with enthusiastic applause. Upon reaching Oradea, they participated in the procession held at the central square. There were a small number of Jews among the crowd since the Hungarian government had recently decided to exempt Jews from military duties and instead assign them to labor battalions. Their task was to construct highways and railroads for the government without receiving any payment. The crowd eagerly awaited Regent Horthy's arrival, followed by parading Hungarian troops, cavalry, and artillery. The officials from many organizations, including the Catholic Church, the Rotary Club, and representatives of the minorities, were also there. Each building that overlooked the square was decorated with flags, some Hungarian. One-third of the flags were German, alongside numerous Italian, Spanish, and Japanese flags. The event organizer ensured that the celebration focused on the Axis powers rather than Greater Hungary[59]:

> Finally Mme. Horthy appeared on the reviewing stand and waved maternally to the crowd. Then the Admiral himself arrived and the crowd rejoiced hysterically […]. At the station he had entered an automobile and been driven to the plaza. Only then he had he mounted his horse (which had been ridden from the station by one of his aides) and cantered to the reviewing stand, where now he climbed the podium to deliver the speech that was to climax his long career of terror and intrigue.[60]

After five days, White embarked on a vintage Mercedes journey from Oradea to Cluj to partake in the festivities commemorating the Hungarian

[59] Ibid, 96.
[60] Ibid, 97.

occupation. Once again, he received an invitation from the Hungarian propaganda and was joined by Baron Wimpfen, "foreign chief of Magyar Radio," Richard Gosling, an Englishman with a Hungarian mother whose brother broadcasted Hungarian propaganda in English, and an Italian leader of the fascist group in Budapest. Gosling, a likable young man with slightly "divided loyalties," was scheduled to host a radio program for NBC (the *National Broadcasting Company* in the USA).[61]

They headed in a military convoy to the village of Bánffy – Hunyád near Cluj. According to White, "most of the inhabitants of the region were Rumanian peasants, who groveled ostentatiously before they newly restored Hungarian masters." He described his interactions with various individuals during his journey, including Jewish shopkeepers, their struggling Romanian customers, and peasants buying cornmeal for their daily meals.[62] His travel companions expressed contempt and deep anguish in their comments:

> Indeed, the Magyar attitude toward Rumanians was perfectly comparable to the Southern white man's attitude toward Negroes. Improbable as it may seem, I think the average Hungarian despised Rumanians even more than Jews.[63]

Upon arrival at Bánffy-Hunyád, they were greeted by a Jewish landowner whose excessive friendliness highlighted the precariousness of his social standing. In commemoration of the "liberation," he presented them with a customary chicken meal and directed them to the residence of a Hungarian Unitarian preacher. It is worth noting that Wimpfen declined to stay overnight in the home of a Jewish person, although having no qualms about sharing meals and beverages with them.[64]

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[61] Ibid, 98–99.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid, 99.
[64] Ibid, 100.

The "triumphal entry into Kolosvar" was an exact copy of Nagyvárad, including Horthy's speech. Exhausted, White withdrew to Hotel Central and composed his broadcast. Upon entering the lobby, he was pleasantly surprised to encounter John Quinn, an American acquaintance from Bucharest. Quinn was the general manager of the Romanian Telephone Company, a subsidiary of International Telephone and Telegraph. He was furious because the Hungarians had recently taken IT&T property worth ten million dollars without compensation.[65] Quinn was satisfied to learn they could not operate "the Cluj exchange," a recently acquired US technology only familiar to the Romanians he trained.[66] He did not anticipate that the exchange would remain operational under the oversight of German engineers, allowing White to relay his story to Berne for the US organization by telephone.

Shortly after the celebration concluded, "the vandalism became an orgy." The prohibition order was disregarded as intoxicated soldiers flaunted bottles of Tokay and "baratsk" while looting all the stores, particularly those owned by Jewish and Romanian persons. Baron Wimpfen demanded that White finish his report for the military censorship to scrutinize it thoroughly. The script was severely damaged yet still comprehensible. He could not change his writings about the prevailing atmosphere of joy or make certain omissions that more accurately depict the harsh reality. He was equally forbidden from refusing to participate in the broadcast in the plaza, even while intoxicated soldiers were creating a disturbance on King Ferdinand Street and vandalizing stores in the town's commercial district, including a Romanian bookstore.[67] The events of that night appeared to be a less coordinated and effective version of the Kristallnacht, also known as the "Night of Crystal,"

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[65] Ibid, 101.
[66] Ibid, 102.
[67] Ibid, 103.

which occurred a few years earlier on November 9–10, 1938, across Nazi Germany.

Countess Waldeck also emphasized the Romanian Government's determination to engage global attention about their perspective on the Transylvanian issue and that they sent an invitation to international media for the August 1940 tour to the contested region along the Romanian-Hungarian border. Considering that the Hungarians had sought to sway global opinion in their favor for two decades, in Countess Waldeck's opinion, the tardy Romanian attempt was lamentably ineffective. Nevertheless, affluent individuals found it easier to resist propaganda than their less wealthy counterparts. The international media assembly convened in the sleeping car for Cluj on August 15th mainly included Americans, accompanied by a few Swiss journalists. The German journalists had yet to receive authorization from their embassy to join the expedition. Countess Waldeck thought this might be seen as a sign of German interest in Transylvania at a time when Germany was trying to remain neutral. Italian journalists mirrored this action, whereas their British and French counterparts were not extended invitations. The Americans had united in nearly complete force.[68]

Waldeck claimed that the expedition aimed to demonstrate that the predominant demographic in this border area was Rumanian, while Hungarians were primarily located in urban centers. This information had garnered significant attention from the international media even before the trip. Maps depicting the distribution of Hungarians, Germans, and Romanians across Transylvania had flooded the media in the preceding week. The presence of a Hungarian would not have altered their opinions. The Countess claimed they were all pro-Rumanian, partially due to their genuine admiration for the nation and its inhabitants and partly because

[68] Rosie G. Waldeck, *Athene Palace Bucharest. Hitler's "New Order" Comes to Rumania* (London: Constable, 1943), 107.

they opposed a world that was shaped or endorsed by Hitler. However, the Romanian Ministry of Propaganda officials disagreed. They constantly monitored the foreigners and dissuaded any personal initiative. Each car included someone who disseminated continuous propaganda and monitored their discussions. They halted at the cities for overnight stays since they were mostly Hungarian and deemed perilous territory. They saw several Romanian villages and stopped at most of them throughout the day. The peasants, attired in their Sunday best, gathered around their cars and exclaimed, "Long live President Roosevelt," which the officials of the Propaganda Ministry wanted the journalists to see as a spontaneous tribute.[69] Her description of the tense relations between the ethnicities in Transylvania is reminiscent of White's account.

On August 30, 1940, in Bucharest, Countess Waldeck found the evening delightful and warm, yet it revealed the initial signs of the approaching fall. On the night of the Vienna Award, the Romanians suddenly learned about the decision through German and Hungarian radio broadcasts. The surprise among the people was overwhelming. The Countess partook of her evening meal at the "Athene Palace" in the quaint courtyard adjacent to the verdant salon. The venue was crowded, yet the attendees participated in muted discussions, and laughter was notably absent. While foreigners appeared grave, the Romanians expressed their sorrow with audible tears. Even the composed waiters exhibited red eyes. She asserted that no one recognized how the Vienna Award addressed the injustices of Trianon. From her perspective, the conclusion seemed remarkably traditional, devoid of innovation, energy, and a unifying theme. She determined that it could singularly foster animosity towards Germany globally, intensifying resentment among the Romanians and leaving the Hungarians in perpetual discontent. The decision raised

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[69] Ibid, 108.

doubts about Hitler's ability to establish a new regime. If such factors had influenced this initial attempt, it certainly would not have exerted that impact.[70]

Leo Sulzberger was also interested in the Romanian-Hungarian hostilities. In the summer of 1939, he researched communications and reported for the *Standard* and *North American Newspaper Alliance* in Turkey, Hungary, and Romania. In August, he established residence in Bucharest to await the onset of war.[71] He had traveled from Turkey to Budapest on an antiquated Junkers aircraft. No one discussed anything other than Hungary's territorial claims. "Nem, nem soha —no, no, never" served as the national motto, representing an unequivocal rejection of the Trianon Treaty after World War. The Nazis were demonstrating considerable progress with both the German minority and Magyar conservatives, who anticipated another conflict.[72]

On September 5, 1940, Leo Sulzberger recorded the advancement of the Hungarian army, which reached the Romanian border. He noted that Count Csaky, the foreign minister, called him to discuss several articles he had recently authored. The Count unequivocally prohibited him from joining the "Transylvanian expedition." Sulzberger responded that, in such a scenario, *The New York Times* would publish no information on this "great event." Csaky was "naïve enough" to trust him and acquiesced.[73]

Like White, Sulzberger had participated in the Romanian government propaganda tour to Transylvania before attending a similar endeavor organized by the Hungarian authorities. The march started from Debrecen,

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[70] Ibid, 114.

[71] Cyrus Leo Sulzberger, *A Long Row of Candles. Memoirs, Diaries 1934–1954* (London: Macmillan, 1969), 74.

[72] Ibid, 77.

[73] Ibid, 106.

a cattle town on the periphery of the Hungarian puszta, famous for its horse fairs and superior sausages. He joined the informal press entourage in Biharkerezstes, where he feigned a mechanical failure. Despite discontented murmurs, the official responsible was compelled to proceed with Sulzberger's other colleagues as planned. The journalist remained in a field to allow the advancing soldiers to proceed, ultimately departing when he was confident he could operate autonomously and as an independent agent.[74] Like White, Sulzberger left for Cluj (Kolozsvar) on a secondary route over a marsh. He became trapped in a soft area, hindering the progress of a mechanized brigade that did not maneuver around him due to fear of being overwhelmed:

> The high point of the performance was a victory parade in Kolozsvar (Cluj) where Admiral Horthy, the hefty Hungarian Regent who possessed neither fleet nor throne, rode on a broad-backed white horse, dressed in World War I naval uniform. Historians have tended to be gentle with Horthy. I personally met him only twice and thought him a stuffy old fool. When he was liberated from his Nazi caretakers at the end of World War II, he was placed in an interrogation center that went under the code name of ASHCAN and I was privileged to read secret accounts of his remarks. In official questioning Horthy was exceedingly polite and faithfully pro-Western. Then he would meet colleagues like von Papen in the camp yard and stroll about under the trees confiding what fools the Americans were and how easily they could be tricked. Neither Horthy nor Papen knew that almost each leaf was wired and that their confidences were being taken down. It was impossible to cable a dispatch describing this fandango because the Rumanians had ripped out all communications; so I decided to drive back to Debrecen from where I could telephone our office in Berne, Switzerland.[75]

Sulzberger returned to diminished Romania, slightly disoriented by the events of the preceding month. He stated that the newly ascended sovereign, the youthful King Michael, lacked the opportunity to unite

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[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid, 106–7.

his perplexed country. The momentum of fascism increased constantly. On September 27, while eating at an outside café, two overly aggressive Fascist journalists approached, claiming that Berlin, Rome, and Tokyo had just signed a Tripartite Pact. "What do you Americans think about that?" one asked, as they sat down without invitation and served themselves wine. "All I can say," Sulzberger replied, "is that when the Allied victory parade is held it will include a Rumanian contingent. As usual you will change sides."[76]

In October 1940, after King Carol's abdication, White returned to Transylvania to assess the situation under the new regime. On this occasion, he flew from Budapest to Cluj and Târgu Mureș aboard an outdated aircraft belonging to the Royal Hungarian Airlines, precisely a Junkers plane. The flight was the first of its kind across Transylvania, heading to Oradea and continuing to Cluj. While at Cluj, he witnessed a disturbing act of brutality as a group of four hundred Romanian individuals, including women and children, were forcibly transported by train to the final Hungarian station on the railway route connecting Budapest and Bucharest. The people in question were held hostage to halt the forced removal of Hungarians from Romania. The victims included people from prominent Romanian families in Cluj, such as the wife of Coriolan Tătaru, previously known as the "royal resident" of the town, the mayor of Cluj, and a physician. According to White, the Hungarian authorities detained the Romanians in confined spaces at the border until the Romanian government agreed to free the two thousand Hungarians who were also being held similarly. Efforts to achieve a peaceful exchange of populations were ultimately proven to be a mere illusion. Despite over a month passing, the attainment of the occupation order had not yet been accomplished. The only modifications made were the replacement of the street names

[76] Ibid, 109.

"King Ferdinand" with "Jula Gömbös" and "Prince Cuza Plaza" with "Hitler Tér."[77]

White returned to Bucharest and documented the tragic events of dictatorship, antisemitism, and the pogrom aimed at exterminating the Jewish population. He remained there for an extended time, during which he carried out the investigation and documented the appalling events that would profoundly disturb him for the remainder of his life. He devoted a substantial portion of the book to the organized eradication and brutal atrocities perpetrated against the Jewish community in Bucharest, often relying on secondary sources such as a "Dr. M-." He examined the "devastated ghetto" and "municipal slaughter house" where the Pogrom against the Jewish population would occur after the events above had concluded.[78]

The notable involvement of American journalists in Romania throughout World War II provides a fascinating repository of historical, military, and diplomatic insights into Romania and a compelling resource for exploring cultural and social representations and negotiations.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the intriguing dynamics of Romanian-American connections and the complex process of identity negotiation in Transylvania between the observers and the observed before and after the Vienna Award. Transylvania held great allure for the American correspondents. They thoroughly documented the most noteworthy events of the era and the people they encountered during their journey. These observations provide a thorough understanding of the identity negotiations between American representations and Transylvanian realities. They emphasize

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[77] White, *The Long Balkan Night*, 108.

[78] Ibid, 148–9.

the multicultural nature of Transylvania, including insights into the identity characteristics of Romanian people and the diverse array of minority groups, as well as the dynamics of the relations between them. The chapter examined how identity negotiations and communication among American reporters, Transylvanians, and the diverse residents of this multiethnic region might be disrupted during times of war and social and political unrest.

3. *To All the Other Generally Anonymous. Often Persecuted:* Intercultural and International Negotiations

This chapter examines the intercultural negotiations between the American war correspondent Robert St. John (1902–2003) and the people he encountered during his travels to or from Romania in 1939–1940.[1] It follows his transformation from an egocentric author to a committed journalist within the Romanian setting. The focus is on the World War II reports of Robert St. John, a highly skilled *Associated Press* correspondent who intentionally chose to establish himself and fulfill his duties as a correspondent in Romania. St. John's reports on the overall progress of the war in Europe, emphasizing Romania's social, cultural, and political aspects, demonstrate a notable level of meticulousness, expressive storytelling, and evocative skill. St. John's Romanian dispatches are comprehensively condensed into four chapters in his book *War Correspondent*, amounting to approximately 244 out of 283 pages.[2] He possessed exceptional writing skills and authored a total of twenty-three books.[3] Likewise, Robert Parker, the AP bureau chief in Budapest who recruited St. John, was a skilled and productive writer and journalist. He documented his harrowing

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1 See Carmen Andraș, "Soldiers of the Associated Press. Cultural Negotiations in American War Correspondents' Reports from Romania (1939–1940)," *Romanian-American Negotiations in Education, Science, Culture, and Arts*, eds. Cornel Sigmirean, Sonia D. Andraș, Roxana Mihaly (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2022), 247–78.

2 Robert St. John, *Foreign Correspondent* (New York: Doubleday & CO, 1957).

3 Douglas Martin, "Robert St. John, 100, Globe-Trotting Reporter and Author," *The New York Times*, February 8, 2003, https://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/08/us/robert-st-john-100-globe-trotting-reporter-and-author.html, accessed July 12, 2024.

war experiences in a book called Headquarters Budapest, which includes multiple chapters about Romania.[4]

The significant presence of American journalists in Romania during World War II is a valuable source of historical, military, and diplomatic information about Romania and a fascinating resource for cultural and social imagery. Robert St. John's account between 1939 and early 1941 in Europe, namely in Romania, includes some of the most intense episodes of the war, documented by all American reporters covering Europe at the time:

- 15–16 March 1939: The German occupation of Czechoslovakia due to the Hungarian invasion of Carpatho-Ukraine, which belonged to Czechoslovakia.
- 23 August 1939: The German-Russian Pact of non-aggression (the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact).
- 1 September 1939: The German invasion of Poland.
- 3 September 1939: England and France declare war on Germany.
- 17 September 1939: The Soviet invasion of Poland; 21 September 1939, the assassination of Romania's Prime Minister Armand Călinescu by the Legionnaires as retribution for Codreanu's death.
- 27 September 1939: the German occupation of Warsaw; the division of Poland between the Germans and the Soviets September 29, 1939.
- 10 May 1940: the German invasion of France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands.
- August 1940: The Vienna Award and the partition of Transylvania.
- September 1940 – January 1941: The rise of the extremist, far-right National Legionary State and Antonescu's military dictatorship.
- 23 November 1940: Romania joined the Axis Powers, the Legionnaire Rebellion.
- 21–23 January 1941: Bucharest Pogrom against the Jews.

[4] Robert Parker, *Headquarters Budapest* (New York and Toronto: Farrar & Reinhart, 1944).

St. John "humbly" dedicated his book *Foreign Correspondent* to people about whom he felt indebted or remorseful, named "All the Other Generally Anonymous – Often Persecuted – Sometimes Murdered – "Tipsters."[5] The dedication reflects the author's response to the profound impact of war and trauma as individuals cope with the harsh realities of modern armed conflicts. It addresses the struggle against the mechanical and soulless dehumanization associated with modernity, emphasizing the need to transcend these challenges through empathy. This chapter examines Robert St. John's inter-cultural negotiation of many dichotomies like the self and the other, subjectivity and objectivity, imagination and reality, and emotion and detachment.

Inspired by the difficult conditions of war and conflict, Robert St. John skillfully balanced his sentiments, such as sympathy or animosity, and intense emotional states, including fear, panic, regret, remorse, sadness, guilt, or contempt, with the disciplined composure, impartiality, and detachment expected of a professional journalist. Because of the deep respect for democracy, the American observer could not conceal his disgust for radicalism and the brutal suppression of human rights by totalitarian regimes. These reports are enlightening and vivid while remaining accessible to readers. The reports were carefully crafted with the intended audience in consideration. Therefore, the tone was not limited to politics, ideology, and decision-making.

"A Society's Window onto the Battlefield"

American correspondents represented the largest group of foreign journalists in most major cities worldwide.[6] Their significant involvement is inconsistent

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[5] St. John, *Foreign Correspondent*.

[6] Deborah Cohen, *Last Call at the Hotel Imperial: the Reporters Who Took on a World at War* (New York: Random House, 2022), XXI.

with the traditional notion of a United States that isolates itself and remains protected by its surrounding oceans. Nevertheless, it is beneficial to elucidate the significant transformation that occurred in the 1940s, as the United States transitioned from being a dominant force in the Western Hemisphere to being a global superpower. Before the widespread establishment of American military bases, war journalists swiftly traversed the globe, visiting Europe, Asia, and the United States, "colliding at warp speed." Equipped with a distinctively American preoccupation with individuals, they issued an early cautionary message regarding the ascent of the dictators. During a period dominated by appeasement and isolationism, these people could accurately predict the occurrence of the Second World War, attracting millions of listeners with their messages. According to them, the storm was imminent. Americans were overdue in actively participating in foreign affairs.[7]

During the 1920s, US newspapers employed American citizens to provide news coverage from foreign countries. The significant human casualties and the influential role of the United States in World War I profoundly impacted the ideology of the newspapers. Americans needed their own visual and auditory senses overseas. The Europeans, especially the British, would never deceive inexperienced "Yankees" again into a costly involvement on the Continent. Establishing comprehensive international news services concentrated around seven newspapers: the *Chicago Daily News,* the *New York Times,* the *New York Herald Tribune,* the *Christian Science Monitor,* the *Chicago Tribune,* and the *Philadelphia Evening Ledger.*[8]

The *Associated Press* (AP) is a prestigious American press agency that has been in operation since 1846 and has made significant contributions to the history of World War II, providing coverage of various aspects, including war and peace. According to Thomas Curley, AP has continuously

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid, 38.

been the first to report significant historical events over many decades, such as the assassination of Abraham Lincoln or the attack on Pearl Harbor. Several AP reporters have lost their lives while covering stories.[9]

The *Associated Press* American reporters who covered World War II followed the conflict's development to the German concentration camps' discovery and the American celebration of the Japanese surrender.[10] Robert St. John's primary motivations for traveling to Europe were personal and financial. However, his education and subsequent experience indicated an auspicious career in journalism and writing.

Third-Class Ticket to a Vocation

St. John attended a writing workshop in high school when he had the opportunity to learn from Ernest Hemingway. This experience significantly impacted St. John's development as a writer. Speaking of St. John's daring nature, Ray Moseley asserted that near the conclusion of World War I, when he was 16 years old, he deliberately concealed his actual age to enlist in the Navy. Upon his return from France in 1923, he established the *Cicero Tribune* in Illinois. At twenty-one, he became the youngest editor-publisher in the United States. He authored a sequence of memos detailing Al Capone's *Cicero* actions. Capone then acquired the newspaper to suppress him. It was when St. John joined the *Associated Press*[11] and covered Franklin D. Roosevelt's first presidential campaign. In 1939, he departed from the United States in search of employment as a journalist in Paris, accompanied by his spouse:

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[9] Thomas Curley, "Preface," *Breaking News. How the Associated Press Has Covered War, Peace, and Everything Else* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2007), 18.

[10] The Associated Press, *World War II. Unforgettable Stories and Photographs by Correspondents of the Associated Press* (New York: The Associated Press, 2018), III.

[11] Ray Moseley, *Reporting War: How Foreign Correspondents Risked Capture, Torture and Death to Cover World War II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 15.

> I had no plan, I merely had a hunch that if war really came and I was on the spot I ought to be able to sell my services to someone […]. But my real ace in the hole was Rumania. […] During six years in New England raising chickens, […] and doing other rather odd things to earn a living, I had been too busy to read newspapers or listen to a radio, but I had had a New York friend send me any news items he saw about King Carol and Madame Lupescu, for I was sure that their story would make a good play and I wanted some-day to try to write it, if I could ever find a way to fill in the authentic background. So if this turned out to be another Munich, or if no one grasped at the opportunity to employ an aging but seasoned newspaperman, at least I had enough money to go down to Rumania for long enough to write the Carol-Lupescu play.[12]

However, his interests would eventually diminish in the face of the human tragedy he witnessed and in which he actively participated. Due to the impending war and the influx of foreign journalists in Paris, he traveled eastward, first to Hungary and then to Romania.

Preparing for a long-distance train journey to Budapest was challenging, particularly regarding currency. For St. John, travel was inherently inconvenient. His main drive was his lack of readiness to connect with people and overcome the divide between his identity as an American observer and the European, namely East-European, individuals. Language was a significant obstacle. However, if it did not involve a derogatory attitude in France, the presence of several nations on the train became unsettling. Instead of cultivating a compassionate disposition towards individuals from other countries, he was *othering* them.[13]

St. John, the writer, had not yet transitioned into a fully established reporter. The text was a work of fiction that was filled with strong emotions rather than being an impartial account:

> The ride from Paris to Budapest did not tend to endear us to our fellow human beings. Nationalities were all mixed up. Children were crying

[12] St. John, *Foreign Correspondent*, 15.

[13] See Edward Sapir, *Selected Writings in Language, Culture, and Personality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

> continuously. Parents were screaming at them in Italian, French, Polish, Serbo-Croat, Slovenian, Turkish, Bulgarian, Rumanian, Spanish, Hungarian, Czech, German, and a few odd languages the sound of which we had never heard before. On European trains there is never any drinking water and we grew very thirsty, for it was still August and hot. We had stupidly for-gotten to provide ourselves with food to last the long journey and had to worry about trying to eat at depot restaurants while engines were being changed.[14]

This journey, marked by the challenges and struggles associated with a lower-class upbringing, was pivotal in shaping St. John's remarkable career trajectory. Despite facing socioeconomic obstacles, he cultivated resilience and determination, transforming his experiences into a powerful drive for success. Each setback became a stepping stone, propelling him toward unprecedented opportunities and achievements in his professional life.

"Sitting Up with a Dying City"

Now having grown a beard like a biblical prophet,[15] St. John and his wife landed in Budapest just as war was about to begin. "Sitting up with a dying city," they were having trouble understanding the menu at a restaurant, so he had the "inspiration" of consulting the telephone book, where he found "Associated Press." The ability to communicate and negotiate across diverse cultures in public spaces such as hotels and restaurants was once again impeded by the lack of language compatibility since "everyone from the headwaiter on down seemed to be bilingual, but the two languages of Hungarians were Magyar and German." St. John approached his career decision casually, reflecting a youthful confidence that seemed to diminish its importance: "The main reason I

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14 St. John, *Foreign Correspondent*, 18.
15 Moseley, *Reporting War*, 15.

went to look for the Associated Press office about noon on Friday, September 1, 1939, was because Eda and I were hungry."[16] Upon arriving at the *Associated Press* headquarters in Budapest, Robert Parker, the AP bureau chief overseeing Southeastern Europe, promptly extended a job offer to him. From that point on, they would collectively confront the most sorrowful events in the history of Southeastern Europe. After the collapse of Romania and Bulgaria, St. John provided reports from Yugoslavia.[17] Encountering Robert Parker humbled him. Instantaneously, he experienced a profound disconnection from reality, which persisted until that moment. The transition to maturity and self-awareness was sudden and unexpected.

"My God, don't you know? Hey," Parker declared, turning to the room, "here's a guy who doesn't know there's a war on!" Parker did not have enough time to teach St. John lessons about a war correspondent's duty and got directly to work: "Never mind. Take off your coat and get to work. We're trying to cover this whole goddamn war right from this room and we're shorthanded."[18] St. John immediately recognized the seriousness of the issue and acknowledged that he had been a passive observer:

> Germany had invaded Poland. People at this very moment were being killed only a few hundred miles from where I sat. I had read newspapers in Paris which said that if it came it might be the end of civilization, that poison gas and bombs and the secret weapons everyone knew everyone else had might wipe mankind from the face of the earth.[19]

As the weight of the situation pressed down on him, doubts and uncertainties began to swirl in his mind, raising questions about his role and position in this unfortunate circumstance:

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[16] St. John, *Foreign Correspondent*, 21.

[17] "St. John, Robert," in Mitchel P. Roth, *Encyclopedia of War Journalism, 1807–2010*, 2nd edn (New York: Grey House Publishing, 2010), 320–1.

[18] St. John, *Foreign Correspondent*, 23.

[19] Ibid.

> Several times during those first few days of World War II, I wondered whether it was right for me to be here at all, whether I was being true to my belief in non-violence by coming all this way to help report a war. Then the argument would suddenly seem ridiculous and I would answer the small still voice by pointing out that a reporter is merely a man who holds a mirror up to life. His only duty is to see that the mirror conveys a clear and undistorted image.[20]

But these were half-truths, and he was deluding himself. He would be unable to stay in control, calm, and collected during the two years spent in the Balkans. How could he keep his peace of mind, calmness, courage, and self-mastery seeing the "streams of refugees" trying to escape from Poland over the Carpathians "being caught in the jaws of the military nutcracker?" His fear melted with compassion because he understood that the Polish refugees deserved compassion and diligent care, just like all refugees. However, the observers were aware that those who survived were fortunate. These were the affluent ones who possessed automobiles that allowed them to flee. The unhappy ones had neither wealth nor automobiles nor any means of escape. St. John acknowledged that the journalists knew the refugees' misery could persist for an extended period. During the survey of the evacuees, the journalists discovered a disturbing fact: a mere 2 percent of the people who fled to Hungary and Romania were Jewish. About three million Polish Jews found themselves in a situation where escape or freedom was impossible.[21]

Parker proposed a plan to report on the conflict in Poland, focusing on the siege of Warsaw.[22] Global events were taking place while the American reporters voiced concerns about Warsaw. France, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Canada declared war on Germany in their own way. Although they believed it was unethical to

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid, 39–40.

[22] Ibid, 29–30.

take pleasure in the suffering of others, Budapest captivated them, rendering them powerless against its endless charm. Budapest was alive, and the pulsating charm of a big city once again enchanted the American reporters. [23]

The portrayal of the city is interconnected with several topics that warrant meticulous examination in a concise presentation of American World War II accounts within a European framework. The detailed chapters discussing the heterotopias seen in American warfare reports will thoroughly examine the portrayal of Budapest's public areas, such as restaurants, hotels, cafés, and boulevards. Extensive analyses will also focus on the critical representation of anti-Semitism in American war reports, namely in Budapest and Bucharest, as well as in the press offices in Vienna, Berlin, or Paris.

The situation and the right to free speech were worsening. Hundreds of American reporters were there but had nothing significant to report or a compelling story to share. Believing that no one was dying or that no other cities were being devastated, as Warsaw had been, was an error.[24] The presumption of optimism was again proven incorrect when the *Associated Press* ordered its bureaus throughout the globe to stop hiring any temporary employees in November. Parker could keep St. John for an extra eleven days without paying him anything. St. John, now entirely dedicated to his endeavors as a reporter, continued his job for an additional two months.

He performed eight-hour shifts seven days a week and authored multiple anonymous reports and circumstance assessments. Parker sent them to New York, expecting a swift publication process. An unforeseen event occurred when the State Department annulled all American passports. Journalists on significant European missions obtained an extra six months

[23] Ibid, 45.
[24] Ibid, 61.

in certain countries. St. John effectively convinced the Budapest consulate to validate his and his wife's passports for Hungary, Romania, Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, and Italy. [25] Their main decision was to leave for Istanbul from the port of Constanța. Survival in such an environment was incredibly challenging owing to inadequate supplies. Hope was sent over a life-saving cable:

> PRICE AUTHORIZES YOU GO
> BUCHARESTWARD SOONEST AT
> YOUR BUDAPEST SALARY PARKER[26]

Bucharest, "Still Gay and Noisy"

On the surface, Bucharest seemed even more exuberant and carefree than Budapest in late 1939. In March 1940, Romania's capital remained vibrant, boisterous, and easygoing, as if believing the impending turmoil would bypass it. Bucharestians persisted in consuming beyond what was beneficial for their health. The affluent consumed many types of meat throughout a meal. They drank excessive amounts of the local plum brandy known as tsuica, Scotch whiskey, German lager, and French wines. They were engaging in every conceivable kind of sensuous indulgence.[27]

The capital's sophisticated restaurants and stunning avenues were utterly detached from the grim reality of wartime. St. John depicted Romania as a unique region that included several comparable parts. He characterized its English-based representations as a Balkan Ruritanian backdrop for comedy shows and light operas. His perspective was more balanced and aligned with reality, as significant positive or negative feedback tended to be exaggerated.[28]

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[25] Ibid, 61–62.
[26] Ibid, 76.
[27] Ibid, 77.
[28] Ibid, 77–78.

St. John's comprehensive recording of the historical, political, and social context equipped him with awareness, wisdom, and comprehension of the critical occurrences he would personally observe. In his chapter "Reporting the Romanian Pogrom of 1940/1941," included in the anthology *Why Didn't the Press Shout?: American & International Journalism During the Holocaust*, he elucidated the American correspondents' interest in Romania. After the capitulation of France on June 22, 1940, reporters lacked events to cover for many months due to the absence of war actions in Europe. They sarcastically referred to this period as "the phoney war period." In anticipation of the potential involvement of the Balkans when the shooting resumed, a significant contingent of foreign journalists traveled to Romania. They were expected to wait in Bucharest, a relatively enjoyable city known at the time as one of the most alluring entertainment hubs in Eastern Europe, for the resumption of military violence.[29] The correspondents included Walter Duranty from the *New York Times*, who had gained fame through his book *I Write as I Please*, Leland Stowe from the *New York Herald-Tribune*, Daniel Deluce from the *Associated Press*, and George Weller from the *Chicago Daily News*. All four were awarded Pulitzer Prizes for their work during the war.

Leigh White, who worked as a CBS and the *Overseas News Agency* reporter, was present, along with a substantial group of British correspondents identified by their bylines. An enticing prospect for foreign journalists was the decision made by Hitler to dispatch a considerable number of high-ranking officials from his General Staff to Romania. This strategic move allowed them to convene in the tranquil environment of Bucharest and meticulously strategize the forthcoming invasion of the USSR. To accommodate these men, advance agents secured the Athenée

[29] Robert St. John, "Reporting the Romanian Pogrom of 1940/1941," in Robert Moses Shapiro, ed., *Why didn't the Press Shout?: American & International Journalism During the Holocaust* (Hoboken: Yeshiva University Press; KTAV, 2003), 87.

Palace, the top hotel in Bucharest at the time.[30] The Romanian manager reluctantly agreed but enquired about the possibility of keeping just two rooms for two neutral correspondents: Countess Waldeck and St. John, understandably in different rooms, as St. John declared. They stayed at the same hotel, surrounded by numerous Nazi field marshals, generals, and other officials of the Wehrmacht. St. John had a profound disdain because of his initial encounter with the Nazis. Living with numerous military officers who wore black boots and clicked their heels became one of the most peculiar experiences of his life. Two German divisions arrived under the guise of instructing the Romanian army in contemporary military tactics.[31]

St. John depicted *that* Bucharest as abundantly populated with Gestapo spies, often disguised as visitors. The Romanian soldiers, whom the Germans were training, were unaware that they were being specifically prepared to serve as shock troops in the fight against the Soviet Union. Upon the arrival of the new visitors at Athenée Palace, "a heavy Teutonic hand began to take hold of this pleasure-loving city that had liked to call itself 'the Paris of the Balkans.'" Before St. John's discerning gaze, a swastika flag ascended above the hotel entrance while the streets swiftly filled with orderly German soldiers, meticulously adhering to their stringent directives with resolute gravity. As the American correspondent observed, they moved with rigidity, consistently employing their right hands to do the offensive Nazi salute toward their supervisors. They openly displayed their disdain for all Romanians, rooted in military, psychological, racial, and even economic factors.[32]

Germany had required the right to "buy 90 per cent of all Rumania's oil, wheat, copper, bauxite, timber, chromium, and other raw materials"

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[30] Ibid, 87–88.
[31] Ibid, 88.
[32] Ibid, 88–89.

two months before St. John's arrival. In exchange, Romania obtained "manufactured articles," including "non-essentials" like typewriters, binoculars, harmonicas, and "aspirin." People were unhappy with such demands: "We have already received enough aspirin," someone told St. John, "to cure all the headaches we know the Germans will cause us!" he continued ironically.[33] On the other hand, St. John emphasized Romania's inherent inclination towards the broader scope of English and French arts, literature, and culture. Romania strongly opposed the prospect of becoming a subordinate territory of the Reich and regarded the Soviet Union, then an ally of Germany, as its primary adversary, second only to Hungary.[34] However, in late 1940, the Nazi Army leaders visited Bucharest to arrange "General Staff conferences with the Rumanians," and subsequently, the initial German units were deployed in Romania. The German soldiers, numbering in the thousands, possessed at least enough knowledge of the Romanian language to complement the local population. Assisting the German Minister, Otto Fabricius, they formed an "army of spies, economic experts, Gestapo agents, and saboteurs." They were escorted by the so-called "tourists:"

> They wore ill-fitting civilian clothes, carried a pair of binoculars over one shoulder and a Leica camera over the other, and fooled no one. They were high-ranking officers of the Wehrmacht and Luftwaffe and looked every inch of it.[35]

Robert Parker stated that Dr. Paul Joseph Goebbels, who had a physical disability in his foot, was exerting influence on American correspondents in the Balkans. He mentioned the exceptional AP correspondent Robert St. John, who was often "threatened with expulsion:"

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[33] Ibid, 82–83.
[34] Ibid, 83.
[35] Ibid, 85.

> Each time, Parker specified, I discovered, on telephoning the Rumanian propaganda minister to protest, that a member of the Rumanian secret police had issued a false report on St. John's activities. Each time the report was inspired by a telephone call from Berlin. The call invariably followed publication of his news beats on German doings in Rumania.[36]

Parker acknowledged that overseeing *Associated Press* correspondents in Eastern and Southeastern Europe was challenging. The regional governments became overly sensitive to newspaper reports because the German minister consistently expressed his displeasure forcefully and issued severe threats, demanding that the Americans be silenced. Parker explained that he had to arrange his AP correspondents in Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey to operate with a level of preparedness akin to wartime espionage. They devised "code words to circumvent the telephone censors." St. John's alias choices were "the Boy Scout" for King Carol and "Mary Smith" for Elena Lupescu.[37] Coler, who faced pressure due to his Romanian citizenship, became "our man." The German minister was derogatorily referred to as "the monkey." Italian and German topics also needed this enciphering method: "Mussolini was referred to in letters and on the telephone as 'Armstrong,' and Hitler was 'that man or just 'Petey.''"[38] Regardless of these threats, "the American public was better and more quickly informed on Eastern European affairs than any other nation in the world." The local AP correspondents, such as Vayda in Budapest and Coler in Bucharest, harbored a stronger animosity towards the Nazis due to their Jewish heritage. All AP correspondents were esteemed professionals:

> Max Merzljak, in Belgrade, was one of the few democrats in Yugoslavia. Boyan Choukanoff, who served us in Sofia, Parker clarifies, was a graduate of Columbia University. Dmitri Travlos, in Athens, had fought the grim

[36] Parker, *Headquarters Budapest*, 109–10.
[37] Ibid, 110.
[38] Ibid.

> Metaxas dictatorship for years, just barely escaping the prison islands. These men, with Benyovsky, constantly risked their lives to send the real news to the American public.[39]

St. John's meticulously recorded reports became progressively more sensational and mirrored his deep apprehension. They covered the history of the Iron Guard, also known as the Legion of the Archangel Michael, established in 1927 by the zealous Romanian young man Corneliu Codreanu. The reports detailed Codreanu's trial and subsequent execution, along with thirteen of his devoted legionnaires. They also recounted Armand Călinescu's assassination and the following execution of the Legionnaire leaders.[40]

British correspondent Cedric Salter returned to Romania from Poland on the day of Calinescu's killing when he and Paul Bettany of *Reuters* saw the execution of the assailants. He remembered turning away in disgust, not due to the abundance of dead, but because of the sadistic enjoyment evident on the faces of both men and women as they passed by to gaze at the grotesque scene. Censors prohibited the transmission of their messages outside the country's borders. Salter and Jim Brown of INS agreed that Salter would remain in Bucharest to arrange calls to different European capitals while Brown would go to Bulgaria to author reports. In Bucharest, additional reporters eventually had the same idea, prompting two carloads to depart for the border. At 7:30 p.m., censorship was rescinded, and Salter sent his and Brown's reports to Amsterdam; however, Brown had already filed from Bulgaria.[41]

St. John relied heavily on the Jewish editor of "Journalul," Alex Coler, for his daily information. Coler provided him with comprehensive

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[39] Ibid, 111.

[40] See Roland Clark, *Holy Legionary Youth: Fascist Activism in Interwar Romania* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2015).

[41] Moseley, *Reporting War,* 22–23. See for details about World War II correspondent Cedric Salter, *Flight from Poland* (London: Faber & Faber, 1940).

reports on various happenings, focusing on the Jewish community's status in Romania. They circumvented Romanian restrictions by employing aliases. The presence of the Romanian assistant would also significantly impact St. John's development in terms of maturity, empathy, and compassion. Coler would acquire St. John's admiration and compassion, but St. John's dedication in his book shows that he would deeply regret not providing sufficient assistance to Coler when he attempted to flee the horrific treatment of the Jews. The Athénée Palace served as the unofficial hub for international correspondents, including St. John, and their sources of information, such as Coler. The Athénée Palace, a heterotopic establishment, accommodated over fifty international correspondents at any given time. It has been extensively documented by St. John and the other American reporters who transmitted reports from Bucharest, the focus of separate chapters in this book.

St. John dismissed the rumors concerning King Carol and Madame Lupescu and dedicated several pages to Carol's complex relationships with the Legion, his abdication in September 1940, King Mihai's coronation without his direct involvement, and Antonescu's autocratic political actions.[42] Among the catastrophic events in Romania from 1939 to 1940 that greatly affected St. John, the earthquake in November 1940 produced significant consequences.

Worries and Trepidations in Bucharest

In October 1940, St. John and his wife experienced the initial trepidations of the Vrancea earthquake, which seemed to intensify their sadness. Despite the seismologists' attempts to alleviate their concerns by assuring them that it was merely an earthquake of low magnitude, people grew anxious. [43]

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[42] St. John, *Foreign Correspondent*, 159.
[43] Ibid, 186.

On November 10, it demonstrated its capacity for causing destruction. There was a brief cacophony of thunderous sounds in the night, and they could hear loud and harsh noises in their surroundings. The Carlton Building collapsed in a tumultuous cyclone of cement and dust. Foreign correspondents were transmitting reports from Bucharest to announce the collapse of the Carlton Building. The location was Boulevard Brătianu, near the apartment of British correspondent Clare Hollingworth. The correspondents held conflicting opinions regarding the vertical dimension of the structure.

Fellow American correspondent Leigh White observed a total of fourteen structures, which included the lookout tower. St. John referred to it as thirteen, with a theatre occupying the initial three levels and the next ten floors with apartments.[44] The building consisted of two basements, a ground level, and 12 floors. It also had a cinema theatre at the rear, two wings with a ground floor, five floors on Brătianu Boulevard, and a ground floor and 3–4 floors on Regală Street. The skyscraper was the tallest building in Romania and was built using reinforced concrete, representing a significant architectural achievement of its time.[45]

Although it was difficult to count the casualties from the earthquake, it was estimated that three hundred to five hundred individuals were occupying the rooms for sleeping. Someone urgently summoned assistance within the subterranean air raid shelter, equipped with a telephone linked to the local police station. Survivors needed to be excavated. "The building cracked wide open," stated someone in Romanian, "like cut with a knife," "it stood there in two pieces for a couple of seconds."

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[44] Ibid, 187.

[45] See Emil-Sever Georgescu, "The Collapse of Carlton Building in Bucharest at November 10, 1940 Earthquake: An Analysis Based on Recovered Images," in *The 1940 Vrancea Earthquake. Issues, Insights and Lessons Learnt. Springer Natural Hazards,* eds. R. Vacareanu, C. Ionescu (New York: Springer Natural Hazards, 2016), https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-29844-3_4#citeas, accessed August 22, 2024.

The witness heard "horrible yells and screams." [46] St. John was also stunned:

> Finally they started digging in the mound of white debris. Several times they found whole rooms intact. Once they found a bridge table with the cards, the glasses off tsuica, and the money all in place, as if nothing had happened. But the four men sitting around the table were dead […]. There was the mother who had thrown her body across the crib to protect her tiny baby. The mother was dead; the baby lived. One by one they pulled out the bodies. But they were doing it so inefficiently that finally in disgust the German Army took over, bringing in great anti-aircraft searchlights, bulldozers, and other equipment […].[47]

The city appeared to be bombarded: numerous streets were obstructed with rubble. A section of the ceiling at the Continental Hotel had collapsed. Both the U.S. Legation and the Royal Palace suffered damage. The international phone lines were operational within a just four-hour timeframe. Dispatches could be directed to New York, Chicago, Denver, or Los Angeles, with "plenty of time to catch the front pages of most Sunday papers."[48] The news was disseminated throughout the entire United States.:

> The real story drifted in all day from around the country. Whole villages leveled. Tremors continuing. One thousand to two thousand dead. Oil-refinery chimneys on the ground. King Mihai and Queen Mother Helen unhurt at the summer palace at Sinaia. Carlton disaster due to faulty construction resulting from bribery. One hundred prisoners dead in a penitentiary. Head of company which built Carlton commits suicide.[49]

Distinguishing truth from lies was challenging. False news was as prevalent in the past as it is today. The journalists in New York were inundated with rumors to verify stories to approve or reject, such as

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[46] St. John, *Foreign Correspondent*, 188–9.

[47] Ibid, 189.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid, 190.

the claim made by the BBC that the oil wells near Ploiești were on fire. Fortunately, the oil wells were operational. Nevertheless, the BBC consistently cited a British correspondent who utilized the narrative as anti-Nazi propaganda. Another London newspaper reported a similar incident, reporting that numerous German aircraft had to be immobilized due to the earthquake. Given the climax of the Battle of Britain, it was reasonable for people in London to hope it was true. Regrettably, the reality was that the oil supply to Germany persisted with minimal disruption. However, these reports needed to be verified and conveyed by phone calls and further refutations.[50]

Astonishingly, just two days after the Carlton's collapse, voices were again audible through the shelter phone. The coal miners were promptly moved to the site and commenced excavating tunnels leading to the shelter. Unfortunately, an explosion occurred in the fuel tank of the central heating system, resulting in a flood caused by a water tank bursting. Additionally, fires were ignited in the debris due to the negligent use of acetylene torches. As a result, the rescue attempt was terminated, and the individuals trapped in the shelter could not escape. On the second day, around twelve individuals were rescued from the wreckage. The excavation continued for a week, and the Carlton process was a disturbing sight to behold:

> […] men covered with plaster dust that made their faces death white, working in the blue-white glare of the anti-aircraft lights, trying to sort out pieces of bodies from the rubble being shoveled into trucks…It took Bucharest a long time to get back to normal. For weeks there were debris everywhere one looked. We wondered what could possibly happen next. Except for London, no city in the world had been on the front pages of American newspapers in getting tired of it. But now we were getting tired of it. We hoped that the violence of man and the violence of nature were over, at least for a while.[51]

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid, 191.

It is one of the most precise depictions of this environmental disaster occurring during a human catastrophe, World War II. Also present in Bucharest at that time, St. John's colleagues, Countess Waldeck, American correspondent for *Newsweek*, in her volume entitled *Athene Palace*,[52] and Leigh White, American correspondent for the *New York Herald Tribune* and author of *The Long Balkan Night*,[53] offered poignant accounts of this disaster. St. John witnessed the magnitude of this catastrophe and its subsequent social, cultural, and political effects from a perspective of personal involvement rather than as an impartial observer. While Leigh White and Waldeck's narratives similarly emphasize the panic experienced by the guests of the Athénée Palace Hotel, St. John promptly ventured out into the streets, mingling with the locals.

A resurgence of violent incidents thrust Bucharest back into the global spotlight after only two weeks of relative calm. The earthquake seemed to have triggered yet another disaster, this time of human origin.

The Miracle of Doftana: "A New Wave of Fratricide"

A few weeks later, St. John resumed his role as a dynamic, enthusiastic, and knowledgeable journalist reporting from a country ravaged by natural calamities and internal conflicts. To understand the importance of the events, he investigated the Legion's history. In 1938, on a cold November night, Codreanu and his thirteen subordinates were transferred from Doftana prison to Jilava. However, they were shot in a forest between Bucharest and Ploiești on the orders of Prime Minister Armand Călinescu, with the tacit approval of the Palace. The group of individuals involved in the execution squad, along with the officials connected to the homicide,

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[52] Rosie G. Waldeck, *Athene Palace Bucharest. Hitler's "New Order" Comes to Rumania* (London: Constable, 1943), 207–12.

[53] Leigh White, *The Long Balkan Night* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), 128–31.

made a solemn vow never to reveal the burial site. They were fearful of the possible retaliatory actions from the legionary, which had been characterized by an "orgy of mysticism, martyrolatry, and hysteria" and could potentially escalate into a "new wave of fratricide."[54] Despite the death of over one hundred convicts in Doftana prison following the earthquake, the specific cell where Codreanu was detained remained unaffected. The purported "Miracle of Doftana" reignited their interest in the circumstances surrounding their hero's demise.[55]

Eventually, a person spoke up. On that very night in 1938, a police vehicle came at Doftana and Codreanu, together with his thirteen companions, were apprehended and subsequently executed while being transported to Jilava prison. The scene was set in a woodland area between Bucharest and Ploiesti, at the hands of a firing squad composed of gendarmes. Subsequently, their lifeless remains were conveyed to Jilava, where they were interred in a communal trench. The remains were treated with sulfuric acid, followed by a substantial amount of quicklime, and, most importantly, two tons of freshly mixed concrete were poured into the trench to accelerate decomposition.

After discovering the truth, the Legionnaires went to Jilava, where they dug through the concrete layer and revealed the crypt. They claimed that they identified Codreanu's remains by the three small crosses he had around his neck and his wedding ring. The chemicals performed as expected, leaving only piles of dirt, which likely explains the Legionnaires' frustration and strong desire for revenge. Following King Carol's resignation,

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[54] St. John, *Foreign Correspondent*, 191.

[55] During the night of 29/30 November 1938 fourteen members of the Legion were assassinated in the Tâncăbești forest (between Ploiești and Bucharest). The fourteen Legion members were Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, the organization's leader, the Nicadores (the three assassins of Prime-Minister Ion Gheorghe Duca) and the Decemvirs (the ten assassins of Mihai Stelescu, Codreanu's rival). See Ilarion Țiu, *Mișcarea Legionară după Corneliu Codreanu* (Bucharest: Vremea, 2007).

Antonescu was instructed to issue orders for the arrest of the sixty-four officials who were suspected of being involved in the assassination of their "Captain."[56]

Looking down into the open crypt, St. John stated that the Legionnaires voted immediate vengeance, so at 3:30 a.m., they stormed the prison, overpowered the guards, took away their keys, found the cells of the sixty-four, awakened them, and then slaughtered them. Then they procured fourteen green-colored coffins decorated with gold, put in them what they called the 'remains' of Codreanu and the thirteen, and hauled them to the Ilie Gorgani Orthodox church in Bucharest. A dozen or more Orthodox priests and Legion members were ordered to chant and pray over the bodies night and day until they were permitted to stop. Another battery of priests was taken out to the ditch beside the prison and ordered to do likewise there.[57]

St. John observed horrifying instances of aggression referred to as the Legionnaire Rebellion, which reached its peak with the Bucharest Pogrom against the Jewish community in January 1941. He documented the sequence of events that disintegrated the National Legionary State, a totalitarian fascist regime that ruled Romania from September 14, 1940, to February 14, 1941. The government was led by General Ion Antonescu, who worked alongside the Iron Guard headed by Horia Sima.

Leo Sulzberger commented that Romania's dictatorship endeavored frantically and indecorously to endure throughout the transition from the 1930s to the 1940s. It abrogated the Anglo-French protection guarantee of April 15, 1939. The Iron Guard fascists in green shirts reemerged. The King summoned the Iron Guard to authority, and corpulent Nazi "tourists" started to populate the metropolis. For the first time, Sulzberger started to overhear Germans discussing a forthcoming conflict with the Soviets

[56] St. John, *Foreign Correspondent*, 193.
[57] Ibid.

despite their status as co-belligerents. On July 3, 1940 — nearly a year before the calamitous campaign—Sulzberger reported from Bucharest:

> The Germans are confident that in a war with Russia they could defeat the Soviet army […]. There are some reports here—which cannot be confirmed—that Nazi troops have been moving East recently. There are similar reports that a German military mission may come here.[58]

Sir Reginald Hoare, the British minister, hosted a goodbye luncheon for the families of twenty-eight petroleum officials who had assisted the Romanians in exploiting their wells and had subsequently been removed. Ten people were apprehended after lunch. Before their final release, some of them were suspended by their thumbs, while others were lashed on the soles of their feet. The massacre of Jews began nationwide.[59]

The Thirty-Six-Hour Bucharest Pogrom against the Jews

On January 21–23, 1941, two momentous events occurred in Romania: the Legionnaires' Rebellion and the Bucharest Pogrom in Bucharest. The Legionnaires' Rebellion was successfully crushed on January 23. As "Conducător" Ion Antonescu increasingly reduced the privileges of the Iron Guard, its members, commonly referred to as the Legionnaires, organized a revolution. During the uprising and pogrom, the Iron Guard was responsible for the deaths of 125 Jews, while 30 soldiers perished in their conflict with the rebels. Following this, the Iron Guard movement faced prohibition, resulting in the incarceration of approximately 9,000 of its members. On January 24, Antonescu's military dictatorship was founded, solidifying Romania's alignment with Germany. Antonescu decided to centralize more power under his grasp. St. John concluded that he had dismissed his Minister of the Interior, the chief of police in

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[58] Cyrus Leo Sulzberger, *A Long Row of Candles. Memoirs, Diaries 1934–1954* (London: Macmillan, 1969), 104.

[59] Ibid.

Bucharest, and the head of the secret police, all of whom were affiliated with the Legionnaire movement. Vice-Premier Sima interpreted this as a declaration that the era of harmony and goodwill with the Legion had ended, so he ordered the initiation of gunfire. Without any reason, all communication with the outside world abruptly ceased.[60]

St. John observed that numerous British reporters in nearby countries were sending broadcast reports to the BBC worldwide, which created a misleading impression that the rebellion was in support of Britain and against the Nazis, which was not the actual situation. According to him, another variant disseminated internationally suggested that the fight arose from opposing groups inside the Legion, one supporting Communism and the other supporting Nazism. While they were "isolated in Romania," he observed blatant inaccuracies in most British and American newspaper articles over the following three days.[61] These pieces were written from locations such as Belgrade, Berne, Zurich, and other places outside of Romania and were primarily based on unfounded speculation or mere conjecture. In St. John's opinion, in January 1941, the Germans in Romania, possessing the military capability to defeat either side swiftly, cynically observed from the sidelines while Romania maintained a semblance of self-governance and freedom of action for a few remaining days.[62]

St. John stated that the "third Romanian revolution" of 1940–41 initially began as an armed conflict between the Legion and Antonescu's army but quickly escalated into a brutal pogrom. Historians and encyclopedias have described it as one of the most systematically organized and officially sanctioned massacres of a Jewish population in history.[63]

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[60] St. John, "Reporting the Romanian Pogrom of 1940/1941," 99.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid, 100.

As the significant events unfolded, St. John entered the town center. The night was approaching. The presence of darkness amplified terror and magnified the perception of danger. However, he agreed with his taxi driver's statement that the situation could be likened to a battlefield. He noticed that the army had control of the twelve-story telephone building while the Legion was launching an assault from an adjacent eight-story apartment house. Luckily for St. John, the area between the two buildings was an uninhabited and unclaimed territory. Earlier in the day, three legionnaires were fatally shot by army bullets while attempting to cross the no-man's land. The American correspondent found the scene to be horrifying. While observing a temporary cessation of hostilities, more members of the military unit gathered the deceased individuals and positioned numerous illuminated candles at the precise location where they had perished. The bright flash illuminated the dark-red blemishes on the pristine white snow.[64]

St. John thoroughly documented the horrific events. Even after the army captured the Legion's primary ammunition stockpile, Radio Bucharest continued to air Legion songs, poems, and excerpts from speeches by the *Căpitan*, inundating the city with their content. With the realization that defeat was inevitable, the Legion seemingly deliberately chose to make one last display of resistance before being quelled, maybe for good. Officers in green shirts rallied their troops and directed them toward the city's Jewish district. St. John asserted that the fate of the Jews in Warsaw may have been more severe, although he was skeptical of this claim. He was aware that his testimony regarding the brutal acts carried out by the legionnaires during the 36-hour massacre would be met with suspicion, even by reputable sources like the AP, unless he could honestly claim to have witnessed part of it himself.[65]

[64] Ibid, 101.

[65] Ibid.

He recalled the nauseating sensation in the depths of his abdomen as he witnessed fire engines arriving at a synagogue that had recently been set ablaze and observed armed legionnaires compelling the firefighters to depart. St. John vividly recalled the countenance of a rabbi adorned with Ashkenazi curls as his priceless Torah and other revered artifacts were seized and desecrated by being trodden upon in the mire-laden street. St. John admitted that he had been attempting to erase some memories from his mind for over fifty years, but there are some things that one can never forget. Sadly, all the witnesses had failed to inform the United States about the pogrom, except for Leigh White. White clandestinely boarded a plane bound for Sofia, and from the Bulgarian capital, he communicated extensively with the *Overseas News Agency*. However, due to the limited subscription of American newspapers to this Jewish-owned agency, his account did not receive widespread readership.[66]

The description of the carnage St. John provided is devastating. During the nocturnal hours, persons belonging to the Legion of the Archangel Michael, following a prayer and blood exchange ritual, proceeded to the residences of approximately 200 to 300 prominent Jewish residents of Bucharest. These people were then forcibly transported, regardless of gender, via trucks to the abattoir located on the outskirts of the city. The victims were forcibly disrobed, compelled to assume a quadrupedal position, and, after that, coerced into entering the abattoir via the ramp. Following this, they experienced every phase of the animals' slaughtering procedure, culminating in the severing of their heads, which led to the outpouring of blood, after which they were hung on iron hooks affixed to the wall. To add a final cruel element, the legionnaires used rubber stamps to mark the carcasses with the Romanian phrase meaning "Suitable for consumption by humans." The most lamentable aspect was that they had executed all of this while uttering

[66] Ibid, 102.

prayers to God and clutching crosses and crucifixes in their hands or adorning them around their necks. St. John's report stated that on Friday, Antonescu successfully implemented a plan to stop the revolution and end the pogrom. He printed numerous copies of a communiqué on green paper featuring the symbol of the Legion at the top, which Horia Sima signed. The order was issued to all Legionnaires, instructing them to surrender their weapons immediately. Further resistance would have been seen as opposing the Allies' interests concerning the Axis.[67]

The phone lines unexpectedly became operational. Journalists were limited in making calls; they had to obtain approval from censors before reporting the news. Many sections of his report were cut without any explanation. As the clock struck midnight, he completed his first phone call. After four days and four nights, Romania was again integrated into the global community. Every foreign correspondent offered a unique vignette highlighting the ineffectiveness of trying to obscure the truth. He preferred to document the events of that night because the censor's rules prevented them from estimating the number of casualties. Statistics garnered widespread attention, and every newspaper in America sought after these statistics.[68]

St. John concluded that the Romanian press did not accurately or sufficiently report on the events that occurred to Romanian Jews in the initial stages of World War II, including the pogrom and following acts of violence. British and American journalists, however, carefully documented these events.[69] The Bucharest Pogrom is extensively documented in St. John's memoirs. The legionnaires' atrocities during the thirty-six-hour pogrom would have been difficult to believe if not for the foreign correspondents' firsthand witnessing of the events. They observed the

[67] Ibid, 103.
[68] Ibid, 103–104.
[69] Ibid, 106.

occurrence of some of these atrocities, documented the number of corpses, examined the mutilations, surveyed the remnants of the seven synagogues that were once beautiful, witnessed the devastation of the entire quarter, and meticulously recorded the methods employed to kill the Jews of Bucharest during that afternoon, night, and the following day.[70] The conclusion reached by St. John is remarkable:

> Now I have told you what I saw and heard and smelled and just a bit of what I thought, during a few weeks of World War II. I have made it as honest and accurate as I could. If there are conclusions to be drawn, you draw them. I have tried to be just a reporter.[71]

St. John did not claim to speak the absolute truth about this awful human disaster. Instead, he encouraged his readers to relay their conclusions on the matter. He strived to fulfill the duty of a journalist rather than a judge. This assumption made his descriptions of violent events truthful and unbiased.

Like St. John, most American journalists in Romania openly condemned anti-Semitism in the publications released upon their return to the United States. However, whenever they managed to avoid censorship in Romania, they strongly criticized any form of extremism in their reports from the country. The Romanian censorship and propaganda apparatus[72] frequently interrupted and reviewed their reports to headquarters, as it disseminated incomplete and inadequate information. Foreign correspondents were required to adhere to the guidelines established by their newspapers, including *The New York Times*, stressing a strict commitment to impartiality and fairness.

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[70] St. John, *Foreign Correspondent*, 214.

[71] Idem, "Reporting the Romanian Pogrom of 1940/1941," 107.

[72] See Carmen Andraș, "European Itineraries: Travel, Censorship, and Propaganda in American War Correspondence (1918–1941)," in *Negocieri transatlantice. Cooperarea româno-americană în educație, cultură și arte/Transatlantic Negotiations. Romanian-American Cooperation in Education, Culture, and Arts*, eds. Cornel Sigmirean, Sonia D. Andraș, Carmen Andraș (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2024), upcoming.

The records of American journalists about the Legionary Rebellion were subject to censorship scrutiny. Ray Brock, a colleague of Cyrus Leo Sulzberger at the *New York Times*, determined that this circumstance elucidated why these stories were "inaccurate or premature."[73] Ray Brock was among the younger generation of *New York Times* reporters who contributed to the renown of the paper's foreign news service. In 1939, he traveled to Europe "on a shoestring," as he described it, securing a position as the manager of the Berne office of Press Wireless coinciding with the German occupation of Paris. Upon the commencement of the Italian offensive against Greece, he was sent to Belgrade by the *New York Times*. He was in Belgrade when the Germans invaded Romania and the Serbians executed their notable coup to repudiate the deal with the Axis. His reports on the later incident are regarded as exemplary in newspaper journalism.[74] Brock documented the Legionary procession in Bucharest, the German mission parade (October 1940), and the events announcing the January 1941 Pogrom. He also participated in the Transylvanian propagandistic tour. He would return to Bucharest when Operation Barbarossa started on 22 June 1941.[75]

In Bucharest, the conflicts escalated into widespread massacres and horrific pogroms in January 1941. The disputes seemed manageable after Brock arrived in Bucharest in late November 1940. He witnessed the events together with the other American correspondents staying at the Athénée Palace, Cyrus Leo Sulzberger, Leigh White from CBS and the *New York Post*'s Supernews syndicate, Bob St. John from the *Associated Press*, Countess Waldeck from the *Newsweek*, and Russel Hill from the *New*

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[73] Ray Brock, *Nor Any Victory* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1942), 84.

[74] Curt Riess, *The Story of World War II and how It Came about* (New York: Garden City Publishing Co., Inc., 1945), 627.

[75] See Grant T. Harward, *Romania's Holy War. Soldiers, Motivation, and the Holocaust* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2021).

York Herald Tribune. Leigh White, who "had surveyed the story accurately," had "censorship trouble" with the Interior Ministry[76]:

> The blue pencils actually were in the hands of young English-reading Rumanian women, one of them a Columbia University graduate. The women censors had been warned that they would be held strictly accountable for any' 'unfavorable' news reaching the outside world from Rumania. They acted accordingly.[77]

They persisted in their attempts to provide reports from Bucharest. Brock diligently worked at the Athénée Palace to produce "carefully written words," citing the Romanian newspapers *Universul*, *Curentul*, and *Timpul*, which offered circumspect accounts of the disturbances characterized as "unimportant incidents."[78]

Brock, St. John, and White observed the grand yet chilling Iron Guard procession of the "green coffins of the Codreanists," containing their remains extracted from the Jilava pit to the cemetery.[79]

The next day, they observed the display of motorized and mechanized equipment by the German Army and Wehrmacht, symbolizing the German mission. Brock, White, and St. John were joined by Countess Waldeck, who expressed enthusiasm for the parade in Brock's most critical assessment. King Michael and Marshal Antonescu were present on the "reviewing stand:"

> The Countess Waldeck, a middle aged woman who haunted the Athénée-Palace to pick up morsels of news from the Anglo-American journalists, trudged along beside us when we had left the taxi, murmuring with awe as three Messerschmitt 109's roared just fifty feet overhead at three hundred miles an hour. 'Magnificent' she said. 'What the hell's so magnificent about them?' I demanded annoyed. 'So clean,' she mused, 'so swift and

[76] Brock, *Nor Any Victory*, 84.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid, 85.
[79] Ibid.

> beautiful.' (…) We had reached a vantage point just opposite King Michael's reviewing stand. The young King and Marshal Antonescu were intent upon the clattering motorcycles advancing up the boulevard. The field-gray machines, carrying sidecars, each bore a driver with a rifle strapped over his back and gunner in the sidecar manning a light machine gun. They roared past, to be followed by light tanks, heavy tanks, armored cars, gun tractors, and light and heavy guns, two mobile antiaircraft batteries, and truck after high-wheeled truck transporting infantrymen who set bolt upright, holding their rifles alongside and staring straight ahead. All in all, there must have been a third of an armored brigade, plus around two battalions of infantry. It lasted about an hour. As bigger tanks clattered and lumbered by, the Iron Guards lining the streets executed a series of sloppy Nazi salutes.[80]

American correspondents who witnessed the events between late 1939 and the early 1940s uncovered intriguing facets of Romanian history objectively and unbiasedly.

During the onset of World War II, Cyrus Leo Sulzberger emphasized the significance of impartiality and integrity in journalism: "It is a question of the prominence of the sayers and how their comments related to current events or future history, not what I had to say about them." [81] Despite being an American Jewish journalist and having familial ties to the Jewish family that owned *The New York Times*, Sulzberger became aware of the Holocaust through his firsthand experiences as a journalist. He displayed a genuine human reaction against the anti-Semitic crimes, unaffected by his background:

> My origins are American, middle class and Jewish. […] I was brought up in great comfort, helped by my grandfather and my uncles, taught patriotism, virtue, a deep respect for education and little about religion. Much later I appreciated that, in some circumstances and by some people, Jewishness was considered a handicap. While I was at college Hitler seized power in Germany and started his dreadful persecutions. I took a course at Harvard

[80] Ibid, 86–7.

[81] Sulzberger, *A Long Row of Candles*, 11.

Divinity School on the history of the Jews and was impressed and disturbed by the persistence of anti-Semitism throughout time.[82]

The reports provided by American correspondents on Romania from 1939 to 1941 contain valuable insights and diverse viewpoints on significant historical events and challenging issues such as dictatorship, anti-Semitism, racism, and extremism.

Conclusion

Among the numerous American correspondents who visited interwar Romania, the chapter monitored the advancement of Robert St. John in both his professional and personal life as he endeavored to gain self-awareness, foster maturity, acquire expertise, and nurture empathy. His perspectives revealed that he was a remarkably adept journalist with a robust disposition and steadfast determination. He was employed by the *Associated Press*, a notable American news organization that played a profound and impactful role during World War II. Among the dramatic events he witnessed as a correspondent in interwar Romania, the November 1940 earthquake and the January 1941 Pogrom stand out. These events were significant to him, and he provided detailed reports of the disasters in American journals, which complemented the accounts of his colleagues: Countess Waldeck, Ray Brock, David Walker, Leigh White, Henry Stokes, Cedric Salter, Leo Sulzberger, Robert Parker, and many others. The American war journalists in Romania contributed substantial documentary materials to the historical record of turbulent events in both the world and Romanian settings. They presented information in an objective, equitable, and predominantly unbiased manner.

[82] Ibid, 7.

4. Journalist Hotels, or Spaces of Otherness

Following the American war correspondents' journeys from one press headquarters to another, the current chapter examines the in-betweenness of heterotopian spaces on a virtual map linking the West European Grand Hotels in Vienna and Berlin with Bucharest's Athénée Palace.[1]

This chapter examines the heterotopian environments of the finest hotels, where American World War Two correspondents gathered, collaborated, and encountered remarkable events in an atmosphere of camaraderie and mutual reliance. Given the considerable number of American war correspondents in Europe,[2] the chapter includes those who traveled from their offices in Vienna, Paris, Berlin, or Budapest to Bucharest. They were led by the progress of the military conflicts in the Balkans.[3] It is essential to mention John Gunther, a journalist and writer, who, along with his colleagues at the Viennese Imperial Hotel, reported on the conflict before addressing the main topic. It could thus be argued that these famed heterogeneous environments were located at the intersection of real and symbolic spaces, where the present was occasionally

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[1] See Carmen Andraș, "Creating History. Spaces of Otherness in American War Correspondents' Journeys to and from Romania during the 1930s," in *Creative Negotiations. Romania–America 1920–1940*, eds. Sonia D. Andraș, Roxana Mihaly (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2023), 203–36.

[2] Deborah Cohen, *Last Call at the Hotel Imperial: the Reporters Who Took on a World at War* (New York: Random House, 2022).

[3] See for details Carmen Andraș, "Crossing the Borders of Cultures: The First Wave of American War Correspondents in Romania and the Transylvanian Case (1916 – Early 1930s)," in *Crossing Borders: Insights into the Cultural and Intellectual History of Transylvania (1848–1948)*, eds. Carmen Andraș, Cornel Sigmirean (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, Gatineau, Canada: Symphologic Publishing, 2016), 199–232.

overshadowed by the constructive atmosphere of collegiality among reporters and traces of history combined with the present.

Acquiring a hotel room involved bureaucratic oversight of individuals' mobility, which encouraged corruption. Paul Scott Mowrer noted that securing hotel lodgings would be the first challenge for travelers arriving in a particular country from "Balkanized Europe" in 1919–1920. Aside from Constantinople and Athens, he was unaware of any major city where a room could be acquired simply by request. He would likely discover that his correspondence had not been received if he had written or telegraphed in advance. The desk clerk would deride him, while the management would exhibit indifference. He could likely succeed by manipulating the hotel porter, who had risen to become a prosperous and influential individual in various European cities. Before obtaining a legitimate hotel room, Mowrer discovered the experiences of individuals enduring a week or more in temporary accommodations.

With commendable initiative, the Czechs formed a government-sponsored "Foreigners' Bureau" tasked with requisitioning visitor accommodations. The main issue with this system was the inability to select their preferred accommodation. Regardless of its adequacy, they had to accept the one designated to them. They needed to go to the police station to register. Photographs were sometimes mandatory, while at other times, they were not. Travelers needed to estimate how long they would stay and withdraw the necessary funds from the bank. They had to apply immediately for the requisite visas if they anticipated departing within ten days.[4] It was a long journey from one hotel to another in time and space.

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[4] Paul Scott Mowrer, *Balkanized Europe. A Study of Analysis and Reconstruction* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1921), 91–2. See also Carmen Andraș, "European Itineraries: Travel, Censorship, and Propaganda in American War Correspondence (1918–1941)," in *Negocieri transatlantice. Cooperarea româno – americană în educație, cultură și arte/Transatlantic*

In Hitler's Shadow: Slices of Time in Luxurious Hotels

Hotels are communal spaces steeped in history. They are associated with "slices in time," which are not necessarily pleasant, particularly in wartime contexts. Their present circumstances may evoke memories. Heterotopias are leading to "heterochronies." In such cases, people can completely disrupt their "traditional time." Different from museums and libraries, which are regarded as "heterotopias of indefinitely accumulating time" and "establishing a sort of general archive," aiming to "enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes," hotels are not intended to serve as records of moments about their past events. On the contrary, they are meant to make individuals enjoy the present moment. Nonetheless, "slices" of history may render their existence apparent and anticipate upcoming events.[5]

During the interwar period, press centers in Vienna, Paris, or Berlin were the primary locations for American reporters, from which they embarked on their successive journalistic assignments throughout the war scene. Renowned journalist and author John Gunther, working at the *Chicago Daily News* headquarters in Vienna from 1924 to 1935, was sent to London. In September 1936, he resigned from his position at the *Chicago Daily News* and returned to the United States. In October 1937, he traveled to Asia with his wife, Frances Gunther. Therefore, starting from the late 1930s, he focused exclusively on conducting his *Inside* series of political investigations worldwide. In the early 1930s, he was still the Vienna correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News*, covering Central Europe and the Balkans, Romania included. His correspondence

Negotiations. Romanian-American Cooperation in Education, Culture, and Arts, eds. Cornel Sigmirean, Sonia D. Andraș, Carmen Andraș (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2024), upcoming.

[5] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 26, DOI 10.2307/464648.

spanned "from the Adriatic to the Golden Horn" and included nine countries (Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey), which he sought to visit on this occasion. "We had wings on our heels in those dulcet days, even if the Orient Express was slow," he commented later.[6]

Deborah Cohen stated that John Gunther came to Europe in the early 1920s, like his colleagues, James Vincent (Jimmy) Sheean[7] and Dorothy Thompson,[8] "as young reporters." Cohen also claimed that when their editors sent them to Bucharest, Prague, and Vienna, the American journalists were aware of flaws in the 1919 Versailles Peace Treaty. They discovered that the new democracies formed from the pieces of vanquished empires were fragile, with a fractured economy and riven politics. Lacking clear ethnic boundaries, the governments conceived at the Paris Peace Conference were no match for the nationalist sentiments brewing inside their borders.[9]

American foreign correspondents traveled regularly, met often, transferred information, partied, and were loyal friends even when intensely competitive.[10] Hotels were ideal meeting places, encouraging free communication, information exchange, political debates, and camaraderie. Hotel Imperial in Vienna was one of the friendliest social settings. Until the summer of 1939, the disputes were brief and exceeded by their companionship, as they had seen each other come and go from one difficult place to another, spending evenings together at the Hotel Imperial

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6 John Gunther, *A Fragment of Autobiography. The Fun of Writing the Inside Books* (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1962), 3.

7 James Vincent Sheean, reporter for the *New York Herald Tribune* during the Spanish Civil War, author of *Personal History* (1935), awarded the National Book Award for Biography.

8 Political journalist with the *New York Herald Tribune* and the first woman to lead an exceptional American overseas news bureau such as Berlin's. Her second spouse was the celebrated American novelist Sinclair Lewis.

9 Cohen, *Last Call at the Hotel Imperial*, xx.

10 Gunther, *A Fragment of Autobiography*, 6.

in Vienna.[11] On intermittent occasions for socializing, the journalists initially mocked the information on the emergence of authoritarian leaders in Italy and Germany, but also in Central and Eastern Europe. However, they quickly saw that these magnified personalities had the potential to become tyrants.[12]

Hotel Imperial in Vienna and Hotel Adlon in Berlin, both of which have a rich and eventful past, served as gathering spots for American correspondents. The Hotel Adlon Kempinski in Berlin is located on Unter den Linden, the main thoroughfare in the Mitte area. It is positioned right opposite the Tiergarten and the Brandenburg Gate. It stands at the point where Unter den Linden and Pariser Platz intersect. This structure functioned as a watchtower on the 1938 Third Reich plan of Berlin, strategically positioned between important buildings and organizations such as Hitler's residence, the Ministry of Information, the Kaiserhof Hotel, and the Reich Chancellery.[13]

During the late 1930s, a substantial number of American and British diplomats, entrepreneurs, and reporters often gathered at the bar of the Hotel Adlon in Berlin, like at the Athénée Palace Hotel in Bucharest. Despite their awareness of hidden microphones, they engaged in covert conversation at their coffee tables, seemingly intent on maintaining the confidentiality of their discussions. One of the most famous customers of the hotel bar was American war journalist William Lawrence Shirer. The book he wrote on Nazi Germany, titled *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, has been widely read by millions of people and cited in scholarly literature for almost fifty years. Additionally, Shirer was a member of the CBS radio crew. However, most visitors at the Hotel Adlon consisted of high-ranking officials, spies, merchants, and officers from Hitler's inner

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[11] Cohen, *Last Call at the Hotel Imperial*, XXXIII.

[12] Ibid, xx.

[13] See maps in James MacManus, *Midnight in Berlin* (London: Duckworth Overlook, 2017).

circle. They were placed at separate tables, attentively observing the people from outside.[14]

Daring correspondents like Dorothy Thompson, John Gunther, or H. R. Knickerbocker[15] interviewed those who were either future or existing dictators, such as Hitler, Mussolini, and people with similar characteristics to Hitler, referred to as "little Hitlers." These individuals could change the course of history by redirecting events in various directions while gathering in temporary, peaceful hotels to share their thoughts and opinions. The presence of numerous prominent individuals interviewed by reporters at the Vienna and Berlin hotels underscored their high status.[16] During her travels to Ankara, Bucharest, or Belgrade, Dorothy Thompson was sometimes shocked by the astonishingly passive attitude of many of the politicians she interviewed. However, optimism prevailed if the will to oppose Hitler persisted, and the mention of Franklin D. Roosevelt symbolized hope.[17]

Gunther wrote his *Inside Europe* in 1935 and published it in the United States and Great Britain in early 1936. It was frequently revised and republished in 1937, 1938, and 1940, with necessary additions.[18] It was also prohibited in Germany during Adolf Hitler's rule. In May 1936, Gunther received a copy of an official notification from a friend in Germany, which said that his book *Inside Europe*, published by Hamish Hamilton, had been confiscated and taken out of circulation.[19] The book

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[14] Ibid, 18–20. See Laurenz Demps, Carl-Ludwig Paeschke, *The Hotel Adlon* (Berlin: Nicolai, 2004).

[15] Foreign correspondent for the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* and Hearst's *International News Service*, awarded Pulitzer Prize in 1931 for series on Stalin's first Five-Year Plan. See for details Cohen, *Last Call at the Hotel Imperial*.

[16] Ibid, 136.

[17] Marion K Sanders, *Dorothy Thompson: A Legend in Her Time* (New York, Avon Books, 1974), 234.

[18] Gunther, *Inside Europe* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1940), IX–X.

[19] Idem, *A Fragment of Autobiography*, 19.

starts with a portrayal of Hitler, followed by a comprehensive examination of his surroundings. Gunther admitted that he tried to document the impact of Hitler's Germany on every European nation, as well as provide an analysis of significant European crises and circumstances. He traveled in a circular route, visiting France, Spain, and Italy, with a detour to England. He traversed the ancient countries of Central Europe and the resilient survivors of the Balkans. He completed the encirclement of Germany by including what was once Poland, then briefly toured Scandinavia and the neutral states and explored regions in Western Europe like Geneva before finally heading to the Soviet Union. [20] He released *The High Cost of Hitler* in 1939 as a sequel to *Inside Europe*, compiling radio messages from several European locations to the National Broadcasting Company in the United States. These broadcasts were made throughout the summer of 1938 and continued until the outbreak of the war.[21]

John Gunther and Dorothy Thompson both held fond memories of the Kaiserhof Hotel. Gunther recalled that in the evenings, when exhausted, Hitler periodically called his friend and "court jester" Hanfstaengl[22] to play music for him to sleep, commonly selecting works by Beethoven and Wagner and less often by Schumann or Verdi since Hitler required music akin to a narcotic. Hanfstaengl was a pianist of Luciferian magnetism. Gunther heard him strike the keys at the Kaiserhof Hotel so violently that the walls trembled. During his performances, Hanfstaengl maintained rhythm by inflating his cheeks and emitting sounds like a trumpet. The

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[20] Idem, *Inside Europe*, XI.

[21] See Idem, *The High Cost of Hitler* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1939).

[22] Throughout most of the 1920s, Ernst Hanfstaengl acquainted Hitler with Munich's elite and assisted in refining his public persona. He further contributed to the funding of the publishing of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and composed marches for the Brownshirts and Hitler Youth. See for details on his life, William Shirer, *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1960), 47.

result was remarkable. One could not help but imagine that a trumpeter was hidden nearby.[23]

Cohen noted that Germany also banned Thompson's writings under Hitler's dictatorship for the interview at the Kaiserhof Hotel. She had already become a notable figure at social events in Café Louvre in Vienna and the bar at Hotel Adlon in Berlin. Thompson engaged in lively discussions, laughter, and storytelling, her "pink cheeks" reflecting her excellent physical condition. She also demonstrated a high tolerance for alcohol, took control of flights, and located automobiles in places inaccessible to others. When she needed a visa for her journey to Central and Eastern Europe, she counterfeited one and embellished it with the crimson seal of a coffee can.[24] Alongside enjoyable experiences with her colleagues, the painful events in Germany were also linked to the hotels that later became iconic representations of the Fascist regime. In 1931, Thompson received an invitation from the Nazi Party to interview the soon-to-become Fuhrer in his opulent salon at the Kaiserhof Hotel for *Cosmopolitan* magazine.[25] Before Hitler's rise to power, it served as the general headquarters for the Nazi party. Thompson prolonged the interview and included it in her renowned book, *I Saw Hitler*, which was released before 1933 when Hitler assumed the position of the German chancellor.[26]

"The interview was difficult because one cannot continue a conversation with Adolf Hitler," she confessed in *Cosmopolitan*. She characterized his speech as always resembling an address to a large gathering. The timbre

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23 Gunther, *Inside Europe*, 5–7.

24 Cohen, *Last Call at the Hotel Imperial*, 44.

25 First "grand hotel" in Berlin, Kaiserhof Hotel was located next to the Reich Chancellery. On January 30, 1933, Joseph Goebbels, and other Nazi officials met in the Kaiserhof waiting for Hitler's appointment as Chancellor. Finally, returned to the hotel to inform them about his success. See, *DBpedia*, http://dbpedia.org, accessed July 23, 2023.

26 Dorothy Thompson, *I Saw Hitler* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1932).

of his voice was characterized by a "hysterical note," sometimes escalating to the point of practically screaming. He seemed to be in a state of a trance.[27] Thompson's harsh criticism enraged Hitler, and in 1934, he publicly commanded her to depart from Nazi Germany as a punishment for the "crime of blasphemy." She was the first American journalist to be forcibly removed from Germany by the Nazi administration.[28]

Hotel Adlon in Berlin, formerly a gathering spot for journalists from throughout the world, acquired a foreboding atmosphere after Hitler's rise to power. In the summer of 1934, Dorothy Thomson was visited by the state secret police at Hotel Adlon. A policeman delivered an order to her, ordering her to depart from Germany within 48 hours. Hitler's first evacuation of a foreign reporter garnered global attention and was prominently featured on the front pages of newspapers worldwide. According to the *New York Times*, in a display of collegiality, almost all American and British reporters gathered at the train station to bid her farewell. "They gave her a bunch of American Beauty roses as a token of their affection and esteem."[29]

John Gunther's time spent in Vienna in public settings became repetitive and regular. Every morning, he would meet with Marcel Fodor, a close acquaintance of Dorothy Thompson, at the Hotel Imperial. The jewelry dealers, gamblers, and musicians shared the rear room at the café on the ground level. A few turpentine and flax dealers settled at the front. Reporters occupied the area with a low ceiling and paneling that faced the street. The large mirror on the opposite wall showed the people

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[27] "Dorothy Thompson," Americans and the Holocaust, *Washington DC: the Holocaust Memorial Museum*, 2023, https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/americans-and-the-holocaust/personal-story/dorothy-thompson, accessed July 24, 2023.

[28] See Peter Carlson, "American Journalist Dorothy Thompson Underestimates Hitler," *Historynet*, https://www.historynet.com/encounter-dorothy-thompson-underestimates-hitler/, accessed July 25, 2023.

[29] Ibid.

entering and leaving the room, including "former Ottoman potentates and Montenegrin bandits." These persons were often involved in plots, illegal arms trading, and conspiracies against the established order. The area had an air of intrigue; it was said to be the site where the murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand had been schemed. A waiter, wearing white gloves, supervised a wooden cupboard containing sixteen Austrian newspapers and over sixty foreign publications, all filled with extensive and engaging articles. Gunther's articles now included a photograph of himself: "a good-looking young man with quizzical eyes." [30]

The hotel epitomized nineteenth-century Viennese elegance and opulence with its "red carpets and Royal Staircase, ornate marble, hand-carved statues, and massive crystal chandeliers."[31] Regrettably, the most well-remembered features of Hotel Imperial's history are associated with Hitler's progress towards totalitarianism. In 1908, at eighteen, he first saw the hotel when he relocated to Vienna to gain admission to the Academy of Fine Arts. However, his performance was so inadequate that he failed the admission exams. Hitler did not get conventional employment but instead held a position as a laborer at the Hotel Imperial. Feeling embarrassed by his impoverished state, he solemnly vowed to return to the Hotel Imperial. He strongly desired to experience strolling on the red carpet underneath the chandeliers and feeling comfortable among the magnificence. [32] Therefore, after the Anschluss, Hitler triumphantly returned to the Imperial Hotel on the afternoon of 14 March 1938. On the next day, Hitler, along with Joseph Goebbels, greeted the masses from the hotel balcony and officially declared the Anschluss, which was

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[30] Cohen, *Last Call at the Hotel Imperial*, 124–5.

[31] Rhonda Spivak, "Editor's Report from the Imperial Hotel-Where Hitler Stayed When in Vienna after the Anschluss," *Winnipeg Jewish Review*, October 14, 2014, https://www.winnipegjewishreview.com/article_detail.cfm?id=4446&sec=5, accessed August 3, 2024.

[32] Cohen, *Last Call at the Hotel Imperial*, 280.

the incorporation of Austria into the German Reich. As an esteemed visitor, he returned to the hotel, occupying a luxurious suite on the first floor, conveniently located next to Eva Braun's room.[33] The scene was of Hitler being greeted by ecstatic crowds in Vienna:

> On the afternoon of March 14, 1938, the Führer's Mercedes-Benz convertible glided through the streets of Vienna. Hitler didn't set up his headquarters in the Chancellery. Instead, he took a first-floor suite at the Hotel Imperial, up a flight of stairs from the café where the correspondents had once gathered […]. The Hotel Imperial's balconies were draped in Nazi banners decorated with the heraldic eagle, in red, white, and black. Outside, ecstatic crowds—hundreds of thousands of people—cheered the Führer from the Ringstrasse. The mood was spontaneous, exultant. 'Not a shot was fired, it was a war of flowers,' was the way that Franz von Papen[34] would describe the Anschluss.[35]

Since 1945, access to the Hotel Imperial's "Hitler balcony" has been restricted to the public. The House of Austrian History, Vienna's museum, was established in 2018 and is dedicated to current history. It has once again brought attention to the balcony among Austrian historians. The decision was made to restore public access to the balcony, which was seen as a clear representation of Nazi control in Vienna.[36]

During World War II, public spaces like hotels featured "slices" from various historical periods. These elements could complement or contrast each other, creating a unique setting due to the diverse human interactions. While the space is uniform in its components, it presents a sense of diversity overall. Hotels serve as authentic preservers of historical events and experiences.

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[33] See *The Hitler Pages. Historical Hitler Sites*, http://www.hitlerpages.com/pagina26a.html, accessed July 23, 2023.

[34] Chancellor of Germany in 1932, and then vice-chancellor under Adolf Hitler from 1933 to 1934.

[35] Cohen, *Last Call at the Hotel Imperial*, 280–281.

[36] Liam Hoare, "Should Vienna's 'Hitler Balcony' Be Opened to the Public?" *Moment*, April 2, 2021, https://momentmag.com/hitler-balcony/, accessed July 24, 2023.

Distinct Places and Moments inside a Unique Social Space

Historical slices of a dramatic past may interrupt the normal progression of time in the context of heterotopian spaces like hotels. In February 1941, during Antonescu's dictatorship, hotels in Bucharest became a political destination for the German military. George Weller, an American correspondent for the *New Yorker*, the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Daily News* and a recipient of the Pulitzer Prize in 1943, witnessed the way the "German officers, several of whom resemble American college boys, some lively professors, and a scarred, monocled minority who resemble Broadway Prussians," were accommodated in the finest hotels. The general staff, ready to take command at the start of military operations, found accommodation in resort hotels just a few hundred yards from the palace where King Michael resided. The field telephone corps were working along the main highway. German engineers had already laid out the cables to construct a new system for the capital. In front of the staff headquarters at the Hotel Ambassador, there was a sentry box adorned with German colors, which was quietly monitored by anti-Axis Romanians. At the entrances of other hotels, mud-covered cars of various sizes and shapes are parked, their identification numbers deliberately removed to confuse the numerous agents from the British intelligence service.[37]

Heterotopian spaces like hotels possess "blind spots" characterized by "spatial or social fractures" or unexpected activity.[38] These physical, temporal, or social breaches might overlap many places and instances inside an actual place, such as a hotel. The historical course of the

[37] Anthony Weller (ed.), *Weller's War. A Legendary Foreign Correspondent's Saga of World War II on Five Continents. George Weller* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2009), 21.

[38] Michiel Dehaene, Lieven De Cauter, eds, *Heterotopia and the City. Public Space in a Postcivil Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), (3–10) 5, DOI 10.4324/9780203089415.

relevant space exhibits characteristics of nonlinearity, unpredictability, serendipity, and distortion.

Such a space was the Athénée Palace Hotel. Countess Rosie Waldeck, the subject of Ernest H. Latham Jr.[39] and Robert D. Kaplan's[40] investigations, was an intriguing figure who penned a book detailing her experiences at the Athénée Palace Hotel, enhancing the hotel's distinguished international acclaim.[41] She was born Rosie Goldschmidt, the daughter of a banker, and sprang from a German family with a Jewish ancestral background. In the year 1920, she completed her doctoral studies in sociology at the University of Heidelberg under the guidance and mentorship of Alfred Weber. During the 1930s, she traveled to the United States and obtained naturalization as an American citizen. Upon her return to Europe, she encountered her prospective third spouse, the Hungarian Count de Waldeck. From June 1940 until January 1941, she was a *Newsweek* reporter in Bucharest. In the United States, Rosie Waldeck was employed as a research assistant to Dorothy Thompson, chief of the Berlin bureau for the *New York Post,* during the early 1930s. Subsequently, Waldeck reported from Bucharest, namely from the Athénée Palace. Dorothy Thompson's husband, writer Sinclair (Red) Lewis, referred to Rosie Waldeck as "Graefenberg-Ullstein-Waldeck Rosie lady" due to her extensive marital history and ambiguous professional trajectory.[42]

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[39] Ernest H. Latham, Jr., "Postfață," in R. G. Waldeck, *Atheneé Palace*, trans. Ileana Sturdza (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2000), (306–46) 334–5; See Latham, "Byzantium's Last Blossom: Anglo-American Journalism in Bucharest, 1939–1941," in *Timeless and Transitory: 20th Century Relations Between Romania and the English-Speaking World* (Bucharest: Vremea, 2012).

[40] Robert D. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts. A Journey Through History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 81.

[41] Rosie G. Waldeck, *Athene Palace Bucharest. Hitler's "New Order" Comes to Rumania* (London: Constable, 1943). See also R[osa] G[oldschmidt] Waldeck, *Athénée Palace*, trans. Ileana Sturdza.

[42] Peter Kurth, *American Cassandra: the Life of Dorothy Thompson* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1990), 303.

Waldeck ascended the social hierarchy in Germany using her marriages with a doctor, the publishing mogul Franz Ullstein, and ultimately to an "invisible" count, whose position granted her the privilege of traversing Nazi Germany with remarkable ease. During the latter part of the 1930s, Countess Waldeck released her memoirs, which garnered significant attention in New York. She assumed the role of her own press agent and successfully established her celebrity status with considerable boldness. Contrary to widespread belief, no conclusive evidence substantiated the claim that she was a foreign agent. However, further investigations revealed her to be an intriguer. Upon learning that she was also under scrutiny by the United States government, Thompson promptly ushered her towards the exit of her office.[43]

From the Athénée Palace, the Countess followed the advancements made by Nazi Germany in Europe, including the German invasion of Denmark and Norway on April 9, 1940, and the subsequent invasion of France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands on May 10, 1940. The Countess was present in Bucharest during the first German invasion of Paris on June 14, 1940, and the subsequent signing of the Tripartite (Axis) Pact by Germany, Italy, and Japan on September 27, 1940. Concerning Romania's circumstances, she witnessed the Vienna Award and the ceding of North Western Transylvania on August 30, 1940, the proclamation of the National Legionary State from September 14, 1940, until January 23, 1941, with General Antonescu assuming leadership of the army, the arrival of the purported German mission on October 13, 1940, the earthquake on November 10, 1940, Romania's accession to the Axis Powers on November 23, 1940, the Legionnaires' Rebellion, and the Bucharest pogrom in Bucharest from January 21–23 1941.

During Waldeck's stay at the Athénée Palace, Bucharest was not yet officially occupied and had diplomatic ties with all countries in the

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[43] Ibid.

conflict, but several months later, on November 23, 1940, Romania joined the Axis Powers. In 1942, upon returning to New York, she authored the book that established her and the Athénée Palace as distinguished names. One particularly evocative instance is Countess Waldeck's depiction of the Athénée Palace hotel in Bucharest at the onset of World War Two. Although Countess Waldeck described the Athénée Palace hotel as a cosmopolitan establishment, it was a significant gathering spot for German military personnel who understood the importance of their mission in Bucharest. They misled even the American military attaché, who had the belief that the German military force was assigned to carry out non-offensive training programs:

> Actually, the German military mission, for the time being at least, was just what the German and Rumanian authorities said it was only more so. It was a high-powered military mission, led by a general of the air force and a general of the land force, with a staff of several hundred officers of both forces, and of several thousand men, nobody knew exactly how many, which formed the so-called "instruction cadres," units of the various branches of arms which were to instruct the Rumanian troops, plus the personnel to staff the air defence in the oil region […]. That's how, on that 13th October the American military attache, Colonel J. P. Ratay, explained the German mission to American journalists who, fired by the sight of hundreds of high officers, clung stubbornly to the story of 'German divisions pouring in'. 'The trouble with you journalists,' Ratay said, 'is that you haven't got the faintest idea of what a military mission looks like. That's why you imagine that every *tuica* drinking general has an army corps at his tail.'[44]

Despite the apprehensions expressed by American services and colleagues in the journalism community, she had extensive access to many sources of information, enabling her to provide a very intricate and authentic examination of the worldwide news and gossip center inside Athénée Palace. On the fateful day of Paris' fall during the summer

[44] Waldeck, *Athene Palace*, 179.

of 1940, she reflected over the panoramic vista from the window of her accommodations at the renowned Athénée Palace Hotel.[45] Upon initial observation, the viewer was captivated by the enchanting square encompassing her watchtower, the "Piata Atheneului." This unique setting amalgamated elements of the "Near East" ambiance with Western cultural, political, social, and historical establishments, including prominent American landmarks such as the White House, the Waldorf Astoria, Carnegie Hall, Colony Restaurant, and the Lincoln Memorial. Athenée Palace served as a sanctuary in the city center, embracing multiple areas of artistic, intellectual, political, and moral activities.[46]

The Countess imagined the Romanian hotel as part of the renowned French lineage of luxury hotels, the Maurice and the Ritz, contributing to Europe's fashionable contemporary architectural style. The structure was constructed from 1912 to 1914 and renovated from 1935 to 1937. During this period, the outside was stripped of its caryatides and turrets, resulting in a sleek white façade with perfectly smooth shutters painted vibrant blue.

In addition, the author included a description of the entry hall, highlighting its contemporary desk and polished display cases made of glass and metal, which had a similarly utilitarian appearance. In the "mirrored green saloon," characterized by its low couches and tables, a contemporary designer had embarked on an experiment. The venue offered accommodations in a "pseudo-Louis XV" chamber adorned with blue brocades. The restaurant used a color scheme reminiscent of the French restaurants of the second Empire, using crimson, gold, and white

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[45] Countess Waldeck's motivation explained her choice: "to go on record as being aware that the name of Bucharest's Grand Hotel is really spelled Athenee Palace and has been shorn of one 'e' and of accents for no other reasons than simplicity and readability." Ibid, VI.

[46] Waldeck, *Athene Palace*, 3.

tones. The foyer, characterized by its expansive and dimly lit nature, had a series of yellow marble pillars arranged in three distinct naves, evocative of a cathedral.[47]

Countess Waldeck expanded her coverage of European luxury hotels by including the Romanian hotel in her repertoire, citing its superior elegance, sophistication, and urban ambiance, which she believed sometimes surpassed them in terms of quality. Upon her arrival in Bucharest, Athénée Palace served as the last cosmopolitan venue where post-World War Europe and the new-order Europe converged. The Countess acknowledged the existence of the Hotel Aviso in Lisbon, Portugal. However, the elderly society at that place, both anxious and fearful, only awaited the arrival of boats to return to America. The Serbsky Kral, located in Belgrade, Jugoslavia, continued to serve as a significant venue for the interaction between the two groups. However, this hotel's environment and performers were devoid of allure. There was a complete absence of staged events at the Bregues in Geneva and the Dunapalato in Budapest. Within the confines of the Athénée Palace, an opulent venue characterized by the conventional architectural style of European Grand Hotels, the ensemble of post-World War Europe and the ensemble of the "new order," including highly esteemed artists, were afforded equal recognition, so imbuing the performance with a palpable sense of anticipation.[48]

In the Athénée Palace lobby, Countess Waldeck saw and actively engaged in a comedic exchange of decisions during the "forum of the Balkans." This setting, characterized by the simultaneous presence of both "old post-World War Europe" and "new-order Europe," played significant roles in the unfolding of this dramatic situation. The setting provided a remarkable backdrop for a Balkan vaudeville performance, as confidential

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[47] Ibid, 4.

[48] Ibid, 25.

information of the "secrets of the alcove, secrets of court, secrets of diplomatic pouches were whispered into ears that miraculously turned into microphones."[49]

According to Countess Waldeck, the hotel served as a stage for creating and destroying opportunities, the generation of stories that subsequently spread rapidly, akin to epidemics. She observed that the skeletons of many Balkan closets were publicly shown and subjected to ridicule, while gossip undermined the ethical standing of politicians and the moral character of women. During that summer, the Athénée Palace became a gathering place for various individuals, encompassing spies from numerous global intelligence agencies, diplomats, and military attaches representing major and minor powers. Oil field workers from Britain and France journeyed to their designated locations, while their counterparts from Germany and Italy undertook similar travels, either arriving in or departing from Romania. Moreover, it was filled with agents from the Gestapo, Ovra, OGPU, and individuals allegedly working undercover alongside Gauleiters and determined economic specialists. Despite the varied guests and patrons, even those directly impacted appeared noticeably unconcerned.[50]

Although her interaction with American colleagues was minimal, she recognized their perseverance despite the shifting dynamics favoring Germany. They were committed to doing their duty. Only the American newspapers still had correspondents in Bucharest. They relocated to Romania from Finland, Norway, and Holland in anticipation of the potential outbreak of war in the Balkan region.[51] Gunther, Scott Mowrer, St. John, and other reporters relocated from Vienna, Berlin, and Paris to report on the conflict in the Balkans.

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[49] Ibid, 26.
[50] Ibid, 26.
[51] Ibid, 41.

Leo Sulzberger thoroughly documented the detrimental impacts of the German military mission on the social dynamics of Bucharest, especially inside the Athénée Palace hotel, bar, lounge, and restaurant. The German army mission's pervasive influence in Bucharest was evident:

> The German military mission here is, to say the least, ubiquitous. One air division of the mission is arriving at Ploesti. Units of a Panzer division have been seen [fifty-one words censored]. It was scarcely necessary to issue a communique to let the inhabitants of Bucharest know there was a mission here. At one moment thirty-five of the mission's uniformed officers were standing in the lobby of the Athenee Palace Hotel tonight; one dining room was entirely occupied by them while an overflow of ten tables was seated in another dining room. Unit by unit I noted where the "mission" was being stationed and added: "General Hansen arrived today. He also was present with the German military mission to Rotterdam last spring." Rotterdam, of course, had been destroyed.
>
> The Nazis, in their pickelhaube helmets, carefully established control points at key sectors in Bucharest and set up machine gun posts that did much to dampen the city's normal joie de vivre. Some of my friends went into hiding; others began to cultivate Axis acquaintances.[52]

At the Athénée Palace bar, he had to fight his way "through the press of uniformed German colonels and generals."[53] Athénée Palace was no longer a safe space for socialization and cooperation.

In line with the principles of American journalism, war correspondents provided meticulously researched examinations of historical occurrences from 1940 to 1941, extending beyond the facetious bent of the Athénée Palace performances. They played a significant role in shaping history through their efforts. Notable figures like Robert St. John, Robert Parker, Cyrus Leo Sulzberger, Ray Brock, Countess Waldeck, Walter Duranty, and Leland Stowe chronicled the history of Romania, impacted by the microsociety of the Athénée Palace.

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[52] Cyrus Leo Sulzberger, *A Long Row of Candles. Memoirs, Diaries 1934–1954* (London: MacMillan, 1969), 110.

[53] Ibid.

The Athénée Palace through Times of War: Documenting the Past

American war correspondents residing at Athénée Palace engaged in the dual role of experiencing and documenting historical events. The opulent hotel served as both their residence and informal administrative center. Robert St. John, the *Associated Press* journalist based in Bucharest, recalled that the Athénée Palace often accommodated a minimum of fifty correspondents concurrently. They traversed the region of the Balkans in a cyclical manner, actively seeking information, consistently aspiring to be there at the opportune moment, and consistently endeavoring to outwit one another on the anticipated locations of forthcoming coups d'état, revolutions, bombings, abrupt declarations of war, acts of sabotage, or the eventual arrival of the Nazis.[54]

St. John expressed his admiration for the cosmopolitan atmosphere inherent in the hotel, whereby the desk clerk had proficiency in English, Rumanian, French, German, Serbo-Croat, Bulgarian, Hungarian, and Russian languages.[55] In his opinion, compared to other hotels in the Balkans, it might be likened to a typical high-end hotel found in major American cities, offering a luxury reminiscent of a fairy tale.[56] The hotel could accommodate even a scrupulous journalist such as the *New York Herald Tribune* correspondent Dorothy Thompson, "then still the wife of Sinclair Lewis," whom *Time* once called "the No. 1 U.S. breast-beater."[57]

The army of foreign correspondents engaged in intellectual warfare, using spoken word as their only means of effective war. There were as many historical accounts as there were journalists at Athénée Palace. At the time, diverse perspectives from political and military history

[54] Robert St. John, *Foreign Correspondent* (New York: Doubleday & Co, 1957), 89.
[55] Ibid, 87.
[56] Ibid, 88.
[57] Ibid, 96.

architects converged. Certain people documented historical events, while others generated historical events. During the war, people who visited Athénée Palace exhibited resistance against historical events, while others presided over their occurrence. At that time, force triumphed over the opposition. This conflict was also evident inside the hotel premises. John Gunther, who had more intimate knowledge of Hotel Imperial in Vienna than Bucharest's hotel, described a location resembling Athénée Palace without explicitly naming it. Gunther highlighted Romania's political landscape and key figures, drawing a parallel between the location and a meeting place for the Iron Guard.[58]

As war journalist and *Associate Press* office chief in Budapest, Robert Parker related Bucharest's hotel to the offices of Hitler's trade ambassador, Dr. Helmuth Wohlthat, who spent his time drinking champagne at the Athénée Palace. In the American correspondent's view, employing the political act of surrender, Romania witnessed an alteration from a self-governing nation to a German colony in Europe since German demands would effectively obliterate almost all trade between Romania and other countries.[59] The *Time* magazine highlighted the gravity of the trade treaty signed between the Kingdom of Romania and the Third Reich in April 1939, attributing it to the pressures imposed by the prevailing circumstances. This treaty effectively transformed Romania from an autonomous nation into a dependent state of Germany. The journalist observed that there has been no documented occurrence in contemporary history when a State has made such significant and degrading economic concessions to another State as King Carol II of Romania did in Bucharest last week towards Dr. Helmuth Wohlthat. [60]

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[58] Gunther, *Inside Europe*, 446.

[59] Robert Parker, *Headquarters Budapest* (New York and Toronto: Farrar & Reinhart, 1944), 67.

[60] "Foreign News: Killing," *Time*, April 3, 1939, https://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0, 33009, 771596-1, 00.html, accessed July 26, 2023.

Leigh White, the *Chicago Daily News* correspondent, noted that despite the Ambassador being designated as the "German army headquarters" and the Athénée being reserved for "diplomats and foreigners," a considerable number of officers declined to relocate to the Ambassador despite the clear indications of a significant earthquake in October 1940. White concluded that the Athénée's "Franco-Turkish cuisine," together with its extensive selection of "French wines, liqueurs, and Scotch whiskies," had more attraction for the Oberkommando's preferences compared to the more mundane menu offerings at the Ambassador, overseen by German administration.[61]

The Athénée Hotel reflected the somber periods of Romania's history, during which the nation was compelled to halt its natural progression due to foreign domination imposed by war.

Conclusion

The chapter analyzed the transitional nature of heterotopian environments by tracing the American war correspondents' journeys between various press offices, creating a virtual map connecting the Grand Hotels of Western Europe in Vienna and Berlin with Bucharest's Athénée Palace. The Athénée Palace remained on the brink of its cosmopolitan fate until the beginning of war in Bucharest on November 23, 1940, when Romania aligned with the Axis powers. This event culminated in the termination of diplomatic relations between Romania and the United States on December 12, 1941, when Romania officially declared war on the United States. Consequently, the remaining journalists were compelled to seek refuge elsewhere.

[61] Leigh White, *The Long Balkan Night* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), 128.

5. *Amazons of the Press:* Women Journalists in Men's War

Men did not monopolize the domain of journalism in the United States. Female journalists engaged in basic reporting tasks and were primary witnesses in the battle trenches. Several female reporters were indeed wed to distinguished authors and artists and did not attribute their reputations to their spouses. They interacted as equal collaborators, using written and photographic approaches to create outstanding professional works while providing mutual support. Prominent instances encompass Dorothy Thompson and Sinclair Lewis, Lee Miller and Roland Penrose, and Margaret Bourke-White and Erskine Caldwell. They displayed exceptional talent in depicting characters and situations encountered during warfare, utilizing written accounts and photographic representations. They also transformed photography practice. Both Miller and Bourke-White pioneered the concept of the photographic essay. Miller predominantly created surrealist imagery, focusing primarily on rural traditional life. Bourke-White's photographs encapsulated the spirit of contemporary urban culture, particularly emphasizing industrial development and technological progress. Both exhibited courage and resolve despite Miller's fibrositis and Bourke-White's Parkinson's diagnosis. They chose to focus on the suffering of others rather than their own. As Susan Sontag asserted in *Regarding the Pain of Others*, fleeting images shape awareness of distant suffering:

> Awareness of the suffering that accumulates in a select number of wars happening elsewhere is something constructed. Principally in the form that is registered by cameras, it flares up, is shared by many people, and fades from view. In contrast to a written account – which, depending on its complexity of thought, reference, and vocabulary, is pitched at a larger

> or smaller readership – a photograph has only one language and is destined potentially for all.[1]

For Sontag, photographs are "memory freeze-frames," "a quick way of apprehending something and a compact form of memorizing it," akin to quotations, maxims, or proverbs.[2] War photojournalism emerged as a distinctive career in the early 1940s, gaining a "new legitimacy" after World War II[3] and became a "global enterprise," where "nationality and national journalistic affiliation" became irrelevant and "his or her beat was 'the world.'" The photojournalist was a "rover" with war "a favorite destination"[4] and "atrocious suffering" a predilect subject, namely "the suffering endured by a civilian population at the hands of a victorious army on the rampage."[5]

This chapter examines female war correspondents and photo-journalists who ventured to Romania and chronicled its circumstances in the early 1940s at the outset of World War II. They all resided at the Athénée Palace and often visited the hotel bar, lobby, or restaurant. Robert St. John, a guest of the Athénée Palace, provided a portrayal of the American journalists he encountered at the hotel. He unexpectedly found "there seemed to be nearly as many men and women in the Balkans in those days credentials as with American passports."[6] Documentation on the contributions of American women correspondents in Romania is limited, except for the notable Countess R.G. Waldeck. Recent collections about women reporters' participation in World War II coverage have dedicated sections to journalists such as Dorothy Thompson, Miller, Bourke-White, Sonia Tomara, Ann Stringer, Virginia Cowles, and Betty

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[1] Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2003), 17.
[2] Ibid, 19.
[3] Ibid, 30–31.
[4] Ibid, 31–32.
[5] Ibid, 38.
[6] Robert St. John, *Foreign Correspondent* (New York: Doubleday & CO, 1957), 97.

Wason. Referring to American women correspondents, Ray Moseley described their bravery:

> Ann Stringer, Iris Carpenter and Lee Miller filed so many stories from inside Germany that the Army labeled them "the Rhine Maidens[7]" and *Newsweek* carried an article with that title. On March 7, [1945] Stringer entered shattered Cologne with the first American troops. A sobbing, middle-aged Frenchman threw his arms around a GI, crying with joy at being released from slave labor. Few civilians were on the street.[8]

They garnered accolades for their heroism, devotion, and audacity in confronting military authorities to get permission to report straight from the battlegrounds, which were only available to men.

Women's situation in Romania was no less challenging, especially in its connection to eugenics and biopolitics, with a heavy right-wing leaning. The claim that women attained complete gender equality through suffrage was gaining traction.[9] Unable to prevent women from occupying public areas, eugenicists, far-right ideologues, and political adversaries of women's rights and democracy altered their strategies. They began to underscore the alleged detrimental impacts of women's emancipation and sought new methods to restrict or even prohibit women's participation in public life.[10] Despite facing significant opposition from the patriarchal society, interwar Romanian women succeeded in various fields, including the arts, humanities, sciences, and the military. True gender equality in the workforce and educational institutions was only partially attained.

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7 Albert Pinkham Ryder's painting titled Siegfried and the Rhine Maidens inspired the appellative.

8 Ray Moseley, *Reporting War: How Foreign Correspondents Risked Capture, Torture and Death to Cover World War II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 287.

9 Iuliu Moldovan, "Familia țărănească și familia burgheză. Biologia lor," *Transilvania* 73, no. 10 (October 1942): 735–41.

10 See Maria Bucur, "In Praise of Wellborn Mothers. On Eugenicist Gender Roles in Interwar Romania," *East European Politics and Societies* 9, no. 1 (September 1995): 123–42, DOI 10.1177%2F0888325495009001007.

Through perseverance, women pursued higher education and specialized courses abroad, significantly contributing to global culture, art, literature, research, invention, and practice. They focused on adopting Western trends and technologies for a modern and appealing image.

Maria Bucur contended that, despite the absence of a substantial statewide feminist movement, the establishment of Greater Romania ostensibly heralded considerable transformations in gender politics, at least in principle. This shift was essential in aiding Romanian women in attaining their aspirations for independence.[11] *Femeia română (The Romanian Woman)*[12] was the first feminist magazine in Romania, and women's groups were already well-established before the country's cultural and political awakening during the interwar period, leading the way for later feminist publications involving prominent Romanian individuals and activists.[13]

Male politicians and intellectuals across the ideological spectrum apparently praised women's emancipation development. Historians like Gheorghe Brătianu and Nicolae Iorga considered women's emancipation a crucial part of modernization. They believed that while women should be granted certain rights, traditional and national values should still be respected and preserved. This view aligns with the conservative stance taken by Mihai Eminescu, a prominent Romanian poet and journalist who advocated for slow and gradual emancipation.[14] They also argued that most traits that made women inferior were inherent and unchangeable,

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[11] Idem, *Eugenics and Modernization in Interwar Romania* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002), 111.

[12] Published between 1878 and 1881, this publication included contributions from individuals with progressive, democratic, and socialist beliefs.

[13] Ștefania Mihăilescu, "Istoria feminismului politic românesc," in *Lexicon feminist, eds. Otilia Dragomir and Mihaela Miroiu* (Iași: Polirom, 2002), (198–227) 210–11.

[14] Valentin Nicolae-Quintus and Radu A. Pircă, "Femeia în gândirea naționalistă românească: Patriarhalismul indiferenței," in *Patriarhat și emancipare în istoria gândirii politice românești,* eds. Maria Bucur and Mihaela Miroiu (Iași: Polirom, 2002), 166.

even though they acknowledged that societal norms influenced some of these traits.[15]

Returning to the American women correspondents, the fellow reporters they met while heading to the battle zones also valued them. During their time in Romania, they often resided in the Athénée Palace. Robert St. John recounted Dorothy Thompson's tumultuous arrival in "a dust-covered automobile" at the hotel entryway. Accustomed to being the focal point of attention on her travels, she was irate this time due to the absence of a welcoming reception.[16] In St. John's view, "the best of all the women correspondents was Sonia Tomara," a "dark, rather mysterious young woman" who reported "brilliantly" for the *New York Herald Tribune* and was consistently willing to assist her fellow reporters. In the spring of 1940, St. John also met Betty Wason, a CBS journalist, who, despite her "diminutive" physique, "could use all the strong words necessary in a fight with the censor." After releasing her memoir called *Miracle in Hellas*, she demonstrated the ability to move into the more lucrative field of cooking.[17]

Reporting for *Newsweek*, journalist and author Countess Waldeck established the Athénée Palace literary brand for personal use. Memorable examples of her depictions of the hotel bar and lobby deserve remembrance. She also documented the clientele and ambiance in the hotel lobby on the day Paris succumbed to Nazi power in June 1940. Post-World War II Europe and the newly established order were performing their roles in that "drama" in the Athénée Palace foyer.[18] During summer, the "Athene Palace"[19] hosted spies from every worldwide intelligence agency, "diplomats and military attachés" from various nations, oil executives from Britain and

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[15] Ibid, 204.

[16] St. John, *Foreign Correspondent*, 95–6.

[17] Ibid, 97.

[18] Rosie Goldschmidt Waldeck, *Athene Palace Bucharest*. Hitler's "New Order" Comes to Rumania (London: Constable, 1943), 26.

[19] Waldeck's spelling.

France departing, and those from Germany and Italy arriving, alongside "Gestapo agents," "Ovra agents,[20]" and "OGPU agents,"[21] or individuals allegedly serving as agents. Besides these characters, she encountered notable Romanian appeasers and "mink-clad German and Austrian beauties" employed to ensure their satisfaction. Waldeck also observed "mink-clad Romanian beauties" hired by Urdăreanu, a prominent member of the royal Camarilla, to elicit conversation from the Italian and German ministers, who compensated Urdăreanu for information.[22] She concluded with a merciless inference:

> To the Nazis the lobby of the Athene Palace became a kind of reservation of pre-Nazi life in Europe, and while they conscientiously tried to destroy this life everywhere else, they did their best to hold on to it here.[23]

Countess Waldeck characterized the impeccably fashionable Frau Edith von Kohler, a journalist for the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, as one of the most renowned foreign operatives and spies. She said that, although residing at the Athénée Palace for two years, the gorgeous Frau Kohler hardly let people see her closely. She rarely occupied the bar or lobby, choosing visibility when traversing the great hall or cruising down Calea Victoria in her elongated gray Mercedes. Frau von Kohler garnered almost the same level of interest as Madame Lupescu throughout her two-year residence at the hotel. Individuals in the lobby called her "la de Coler" and

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[20] The Organization for Vigilance and Repression of Anti-Fascism (OVRA) is an Italian entity referred to as Opera Vigilanza Repressione Antifascismo in Italian. The informal appellation for the secret police of the Kingdom of Italy during the reign of King Victor Emmanuel III was used. The association was established in 1927 under Benito Mussolini's fascist administration in Italy. The secret police of Nazi Germany originated in Italy with the formation of the OVRA.

[21] The Joint State Political Directorate, or OGPU, functioned as the Soviet Union's secret police organization from November 1923 up to July 1934. It assumed the functions of the State Political Directorate (GPU).

[22] Waldeck, *Athene Palace*, 26.

[23] Ibid.

claimed she was Heinrich Himmler's secret sister. Numerous disparaging tales emerged over her, depicting her as an arrogant woman or a blonde vampire and associating her with other prominent individuals. Countess Waldeck described Frau von Kohler as a 1940s Mata Hari, which fostered a jubilant ambiance in the "Athene Palace:"[24]

> Frau von Kohler was an entirely different proposition. To begin with, contrary to what the Athene Palace wished to believe, she was not Hitler's spy, but a Hitler propagandist. Her task was infinitely more complex than the task of a spy, and conceived in a much more realistic vein. Seduction was no longer enough [...]. Frau von Kohler, as would be expected, never admitted that she was a German propagandist. The woman who for two years had done more than the German legation and the Gestapo combined to wean Rumanian statesmen and society away from the French, and to make Nazi Germany palatable to them, was registered as one of two Bucharest correspondents for the *Deutsche Allegemeine Zeitung* in Berlin.[25]

In this respect, an article entitled "The Sirens of the Swastika" was published by Bella Fromm in the American magazine *Coronet* in October 1943. Fromm was familiar with Von Coler as a newspaper reporter in Berlin from 1930 until 1938. The investigation indicated that Von Coler epitomized the stereotype of an espionage "femme fatale."[26]

Dorothy Thompson's endeavors and journeys to Romania transitioned her from Viennese, Parisian, and Berliner café journalist venues to the Athénée Palace bar, where she kept records and shared data with her American counterparts. She was a distinguished American journalist and broadcast personality. She pressed Americans to acknowledge the danger that Nazi Germany represented to democracy and the Jewish population of Europe throughout the 1930s and 1940s. In 1939, *Time* magazine described Thompson and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt as "unquestionably the most

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[24] Ibid, 57.
[25] Ibid, 58.
[26] Bella Fromm, "Sirens of the Swastika," *Coronet*, October 1942, 79.

influential women in America."[27] Upon graduating from Syracuse University, Dorothy Thompson joined the New York State Woman Suffrage Party. In 1920, she resolved to pursue a career in journalism and departed for Europe in quest of an intriguing narrative. During her visit to Parisian press headquarters, she encountered Paul Scott Mowrer, the head of the *Chicago Daily News* service, who saw her as "brighter and more attractive" than most of the youthful Americans competing for the modest salary offered by European agencies and the *New York Herald*'s Paris edition. He compelled her to go to a different reputable news center, maybe Vienna, and depart from France.[28]

Renowned for her audacious journalism, she accepted a full-time position as the Vienna correspondent and Central European bureau head for the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* in 1925. There, she emerged as a pivotal figure for the Anglo-American Press Association, headquartered at Café Louvre. She worked in tandem with correspondents Robert Best, John Gunther, and M. W. Fodor. After she retired from the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* in 1927, the *New York Post* appointed her as the head of its Berlin bureau in Germany. She was there when the National Socialist, or Nazi, Party started its ascent to supremacy. In addition to Germany, she covered eight countries: Greece, Albania, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Albania, and Czechoslovakia. One of the primary inspiration sources for Thompson's spouse, famous author Sinclair Lewis, in his 1935 dystopian book *It Can't Happen Here*, which envisions the rise of a fascist manipulator in America, was likely Dorothy Thompson's relentless opposition to Hitler.[29]

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[27] United States Holocaust Museum, "Dorothy Thompson," *Americans and the Holocaust,* January 4, 2020 https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/americans–and–the–holocaust/personal–story/dorothy–thompson, accessed July 12, 2024.

[28] Marion K Sanders, *Dorothy Thompson: a Legend in Her Time* (New York: Avon Books, 1974), 72.

[29] See Susan Hertog, *Dangerous Ambition: Rebecca West and Dorothy Thompson: New Women in Search of Love and Power* (New York: Random House, 2011).

Thompson, a resourceful journalist, found a wealth of political and cultural events in Germany that kept her busy day and night. She conducted numerous firsthand reports and interviews with political figures, forged connections within the various levels of Berlin bureaucracy and cultural scene, and exchanged tips with her fellow journalists at the Adlon bar. At the Vatican, she urged Pope Pius XII to use his utmost influence to ensure Italy's neutrality in the impending conflict. The Pope smiled and remarked that the Catholic Church was not as powerful as she thought, which she interpreted as another sign of pessimism. As she left Rome for Ankara, Bucharest, and Belgrade, she found the fatalism and acceptance she faced increasingly disheartening.[30] During each encounter with peers at the Vienna Café or Adlon bar in Berlin, she cautioned them about the danger of Nazi influence in Europe, particularly in Eastern countries like Romania and Poland. "Rumania was made into a colony, bound, economically, hand and foot to Germany," she alleged in her political essays collection, *Let-The-Record-Speak*.[31] She was convinced that "Russia's is a sphinxlike policy," "distrustful of the western democracies, which the Communist ideology believes to be doomed capitalistic states," but "giving lip-service to democracy for the sake of the good will accruing to the Soviet Union from the working classes in those states."[32]

Even though she did not devote entire chapters to Romania, her insights regarding the political and military climate of the country were astute. She pointed out that the German Opel automobile competed successfully with American cars in South America. However, General Motors manufactured it in Germany after purchasing a controlling interest in the Opel Works under the German Republic. The revenues from the sale of this vehicle were not permitted to be returned to the United States but

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30 Nancy Caldwell Sorel, *The Women Who Wrote the* War (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1999), 77.

31 Dorothy Thompson, *Let–The–Record–Speak* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1939), 362.

32 Ibid, 396.

had to remain and be reinvested in Germany. She observed a comparable situation in Romania since Standard Oil, Royal Dutch, and British Shell owned Rumanian oil, not the Romanians or Germans. This did not, however, imply that these interests would be allowed to export oil as they saw fit, regardless of political conditions. They would be required to work under the new German-Rumanian treaty, which meant that American, Dutch, and British capital would be used to finance the economies of the dictatorships against which France, Great Britain, and the United States were arming for defense.[33]

Dorothy Thompson meticulously recorded the political scene in Central and Eastern Europe. She stated that the Little Entente states, established or expanded by treaties, convened to reaffirm their longstanding policy: "to stick together, to oppose aggrandizement, to present a united front against the restoration of the Hapsburg monarchy and to maintain the independence of Austria." Behind the brave words is a prodigious fear. In her view, concealed underneath the courageous rhetoric was an immense trepidation. The erosion of their faith in Britain was already manifesting effects throughout every country in Central and Eastern Europe.[34]

An emergence of anti-Semitism, hitherto restrained by the desire for favorable relations with Britain and France, was beginning in Austria. The Henlein movement, an unequivocal Nazi organization, was expanding in Czechoslovakia.[35] She considered that informed scholars of the situation anticipated it would gain momentum in the coming months and likely seek an independent German province inside Czechoslovakia. In Yugoslavia,

[33] Ibid, 74.

[34] Ibid, 32.

[35] Konrad Ernst Eduard Henlein was a Sudeten German politician in Czechoslovakia prior to World War II. After Germany's invasion of Czechoslovakia, he assumed the roles of Gauleiter and Reichsstatthalter of Reichsgau Sudetenland under the Nazi occupation. See Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Konrad Henlein," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, May 9, 2024, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Konrad-Henlein, accessed August 15, 2024.

the historical apprehension against Italy and the frailty of French and British influence predisposed the people to a pro-German alignment. In what Romania was concerned, the Iron Guard, "a Nazi organization," was intensifying its operations. Hungary was administered by a pro-German Prime Minister, Julius Gomboes,[36] in fact, Gyula Gömbös."[37]

Dorothy Thompson believed that the issue of antisemitism extended beyond Germany and the realm of the Nazis. In Romania, where anti-Semitism thrived independently of Hitler's influence, in her opinion, half a million Jews faced deportation based on the astonishing and absurd allegation that they had all entered the nation "from the East" and were not genuine Romanians from the start. The "Loyalists" and "Rebels" in the Spanish Civil War both advocated for expelling foreigners from the nation. Jewish deportations occurred as far as Ecuador from Berlin, and by 1938, Dorothy estimated that "at least four million people, a whole nation of people, [were] wandering around the world, homeless." These individuals illustrated the repercussions of the Treaty of Versailles. They lacked passports and, despite their wealth, could not access their money. Although skilled, they were forbidden from using their abilities. "This migration," stated Dorothy Thompson, "unprecedented in modern times," encompassed "people of every race and every social class, every trade and every profession":

"Russian aristocrats" and, more recently, "Russian technicians; Italian liberal professors and Austrian Socialist workmen; […] the flower of the prosperous Jewish bourgeoisie and the inhabitants of East European half-ghettos; non-conformists of every race and every social, religious and political viewpoint."[38]

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[36] Thompson, *Let–The–Record–Speak*, 32.

[37] Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Gyula Gömbös." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2 Oct. 2024, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Gyula-Gombos, accessed August 20, 2024.

[38] Thompson, "Escape in a Frozen World," *Survey Graphic,* February 1939. Apud Kurth, *American Cassandra*, 276–7.

Reaching her peak of success in the 1930s, Dorothy Thompson was known as the "First Lady of American Journalism," the most powerful woman in the United States after Eleanor Roosevelt. Her syndicated column, "On the Record," had an estimated eight to ten million readers three times a week. Thompson's most potent and ardent writing was inspired by the horrors of fascism, which had been her idée fixe since 1931; her meteoric rise to national popularity coincided with Adolf Hitler's ascent. After Americans entered World War II, she remained influential and well-read, but never again would so many people rely on her words![39] Dorothy Thompson exemplified the personal journalism approach that blossomed during the interwar period: "Ours is the age of the reporter," she remarked in a best-selling and spectacular book on Hitler[40]and then put herself right in the heart of events.[41]

Between 1938, during the royal dictatorship, and 1945, under Petru Groza's pro-Soviet administration, the Athénée Palace hosted Dorothy Thompson, Lee Miller, Sonia Tomara, Ann Stringer, and Virginia Cowles. They displayed "star quality," produced outstanding work, and, as Nancy Caldwell Sorel suggested, stood out surrounded by an "aura of the exotic."[42] Another star of the press, Clare Hollingworth, a British war correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph* and a prominent figure among female reporters, also garnered attention from patrons at the hotel's bar and lobby.

Biography details regarding Sonia Tomara Clark mostly came from her unpublished diary, which was made available by her family. Originating from St. Petersburg, Russia, she was an exiled journalist who served as a translator for British military intelligence in Turkey from 1920 to 1921 and the British military operation in Russia in 1919. Between 1922 and

[39] Susan Ware, *Letter to the World: Seven Women Who Shaped the American Century* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998), 45.

[40] Thompson, *I Saw Hitler!* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1932).

[41] Ware, *Letter to the World*, 45.

[42] Caldwell Sorel, *The Women Who Wrote the War,* 193.

1935, she served as a correspondent for *Le Matin* and then for the *New York Herald Tribune* in Paris, from 1935 until 1950, reporting from Italy, Poland, Romania, India, China, England, and Germany. In September 1939 and the beginning of 1940, she journeyed to Bucharest from Poland amid the retreat of refugees, navigating the threats posed by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union during World War II. She encountered Cy Sulzberger of the *New York Times*, Sam Brewer of the *Chicago Tribune*, Edward Beattie, and Walter Duranty in the Athénée Palace bar. All of them occupied rooms on the same level and shared breakfast.[43]

Sonia Tomara, who met Dorothy Thompson in Bucharest during the spring of 1940, revealed her experiences and insights. She was covering southeast Europe for the *New York Herald Tribune*, reporting from Budapest to Turkey. In Bucharest, the bar of the Athénée Palace was still the gathering place for correspondents. They were a sizable contingent and apprehensive. A common pastime was mapping out avenues of escape in case of a German attack. Writing dispatches became a science. There was no official censorship, but their phones were tapped, their desks searched, and copies of their stories scrutinized by the propaganda ministry. Those who made a slip were asked to leave the country at once.[44] She remained in Bucharest during the German invasion of Norway in April 1940.

Sonia Tomara and Richard Mowrer of the *Chicago Daily News*, the nephew of celebrated journalist Edgar Ansel Mowrer and the son of Paul Scott Mowrer, directly experienced the anguish of the first bomb explosion during World War II. On September 1, 1939, when Germany invaded Poland and German aircraft began assaults on unprotected towns, Sonia Tomara and Mowrer were among the few Western reporters present in Warsaw. She continued to chronicle the fall of France, the theater of China, India, and Burma, the struggle in North Africa, the liberation of

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[43] Ibid, 77.
[44] Ibid, 78.

Paris, and Germany's ultimate defeat. Sonia Tomara heard the first rumblings in her Warsaw hotel room the day the war started. She became first cognizant of the Holocaust and the annihilation of the Jewish population upon learning that Jews were being apprehended and sent to Lublin on one of her expeditions to the Polish border. On September 17, 1939, during the Soviet invasion of Poland, Richard Mowrer and Willy Forrest of the *News Chronicle* were apprehended and detained for four hours in Zaleszczyki on suspicion of espionage. Mowrer then disrobed to his undergarments and crossed the Dniester River to Romania. [45]

Despite the challenging conditions, foreign visitors to Romania and Hungary reported that the food was abundant, the Roma continued to play their music, and the lights were bright. A substantial caviar meal at the Athénée Palace hotel in Bucharest was priced at fifty cents. The journalists departed for a masquerade ball to commemorate New Year's Eve 1940 at the house of the American military attaché while spies socialized in the bar.[46]

Sonia Tomara belonged to a group of women who had previously covered the war in Europe and Asia but were disregarded by a government unwilling to permit women to travel abroad during a time of war.[47] She was finally allowed to join US forces in the China-Burma-India theater and flew on a bombing mission over Japan.[48] In the summer of 1944, she drove into Paris, the city she had called home for so long before going to the United States in a munition carrier following the Allied landing in Normandy.[49]

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[45] Cedric Salter, *Flight from Poland (*London: Faber & Faber, 1940), 77.

[46] Caldwell Sorel, *The Women Who Wrote the* War, 121.

[47] Ibid, 122.

[48] Jean E. Collins, *She Was There: Stories of Pioneering Women Journalists* (New York: J. Messner, 1980), 12.

[49] Ibid, 79.

The September 1939 invasion of Poland was reported by Virginia Cowles, an American war correspondent, biographer, and travel writer. She embarked on a voyage to Poland via Romania and remained in Bucharest throughout her stay. The journalist reported on the Spanish Civil War in 1937 for notable publications like the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Sunday Times*, and the *Hearst* newspapers. During her extensive professional trajectory, Virginia Cowles transitioned from reporting on fashion to covering the Spanish Civil War in 1937, the tumultuous pre-World War II era in Europe, and the entirety of the war. After she departed from Spain, she chronicled her exploits throughout many European countries, including Russia, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Finland, and France, from 1939 to 1940. The 29-year-old Boston "socialite and glamorous beauty" came to Berlin after leaving Spain, just before the invasion of Poland, to write for the *London Sunday Times*. Like her colleague, CBS correspondent William L. Shirer, she was struck by the Germans' apathy upon Hitler's declaration of war to the Reichstag.[50]

Before her return to England in 1940 with the defeat of France, she provided coverage of the Winter War for the *Sunday Times*. She experienced the first day of The Blitz and consistently offered updates on the Battle of Britain. During the period spanning from 1942 to 1943, she was employed by John G. Winant, the American Ambassador stationed in London. She provided coverage of the North African Campaign for major newspapers such as the *Sunday Times* and the *Chicago Sun*. Virginia Cowles re-entered the field of journalism after studying abroad in Italy and France during the years 1944–45.[51] In 1945, she married Aidan Crawley, a British politician, journalist, television executive and author. Virginia Cowles was killed in an automobile accident in 1983 in the car her husband was driving.

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50 Moseley, *Reporting War*, 36.

51 See Penny Colman, *Where the Action Was: Women War Correspondents in World War II* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2002), 7–19.

In her debut volume, *Looking for Trouble*, published in early 1941, the author documented her experiences throughout the war and the emerging community of foreign war correspondents that developed at that time. This group comprised prominent people like Ernest Hemingway, Martha Gellhorn, and other reporters and authors who later contributed to the chronicling of World War II. Virginia Cowles' group of war correspondents often gathered in different hotels since "most wars possess their great journalist hotels."[52]

In 1937, documentation of the Spanish Civil War was conducted at Hotel Florida in Madrid, which was often hit by bombs. They saw the Nationalists, under the leadership of a military junta, in which General Francisco Franco had a dominant position, effectively establishing control over Madrid. Their chosen "popular meeting place" was the living room occupied by Tom Delmer, a journalist for *The Daily Express*, where they partook in meals provided by France. Every night, the press gathered there. Among these correspondents were Henry Tilton ("Hank") Gorrell, a war correspondent for the *United Press*; Herbert Matthews of the *New York Times;*[53] Ernest Hemingway of *North American Newspaper Alliance*,[54] and his lover, Martha Gellhorn of *Collier's*; Thomas Loyetha of the *International News Service*; John Dos Passos, who also passed through the Florida Hotel and immortalized his stay in an article;[55] George and Helen Seldes, working as freelance writers, who expressed their strong

[52] Christina Lamb, "Foreword by Christina Lamb," in Virginia Cowles, *Looking for Trouble* (London: Faber & Faber, 2022), XIV

[53] See Herbert Lionel Matthews, *The Education of a Correspondent* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1946), 95–96, 112.

[54] While based in Spain as a correspondent for the (NANA – North American News Association), Ernest Hemingway stayed at Hotel Florida. See Ernest Hemingway, "Hemingway's Spanish Civil War Dispatches," VII, No. 2 (Spring 1988," ed. William Braasch, Watson, *The Hemingway Review* VII, no. 2 (Spring 1988): 4–13.

[55] John Dos Passos, "Room with a bathroom in the Hotel Florida," *Esquire Magazine*, January 1938, 35.

disapproval of the American press for their coverage of the Civil War; Josephine Herbst, a proponent of communism and an advocate for the Second Spanish Republic. They debated until dawn.[56]

Each night, journalists sent written reports from the Telephone Building located on the Gran Via, a frequently targeted military objective. Each of the accounts was sent by telephone to London and Paris and then transmitted by cable to other locations throughout the globe. Each page of the reports underwent censorship and received official stamp approval.[57] Several days after the bombing that hit Tom Delmer's room, the hotel was once again struck. The manager had a tumultuous outburst in the lobby, vehemently denying any occurrence out of concern that it might harm his business. Nevertheless, upon Virginia Cowles' departure from Spain, the Florida Hotel became inaccessible again, and guests were placed at Palace Hospital.[58]

After leaving Spain, she chronicled her travels throughout many European countries, including Russia, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Finland, and France, from 1938 to 1940. She reported from pre-Munich [59] France and Germany and post-Munich Czechoslovakia after the German occupation of Sudetenland. Consistent with the views expressed by other female reporters, such as Dorothy Thomson, the primary objective of her book was to effectively communicate her strong belief in the need for America's participation in World War II. During her stay in London in 1939, she heard that the invasion of Poland took place on Tuesday, 19

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[56] Cowles, *Looking for Trouble*, 21.

[57] Ibid, 22.

[58] Ibid, 42.

[59] The Munich Agreement was a pact established at Munich on 30 September 1938, including Nazi Germany, the United Kingdom, the French Republic, and Fascist Italy. The agreement facilitated the German annexation of an area of Czechoslovakia known as the Sudetenland, inhabited by almost three million people, primarily people of German descent.

September, exactly two weeks and four days following the initiation of the German attack. The Russian Army effectively crossed the border approximately forty-eight hours previously, while Poland's two powerful bordering countries were swiftly advancing like a "giant nutcracker." The sealing of the Romanian frontier left the country essentially isolated and awaiting its eventual collapse. [60]

Virginia Cowles declared that she had not foreseen the swift devastation of Poland to such a degree that there could be no chance of helping soon. Following the declaration of war by Great Britain and France, she resolved to go to Warsaw. The available transport options included ferry trips from London to Bergen in Norway, rail journeys from Bergen to Oslo in Norway, train connections from Oslo to Stockholm in Sweden, air travel from Stockholm to Helsinki in Finland, air travel from Helsinki to Riga in Latvia, train connections from Riga to Kovno in Lithuania, and train connections from Kovno to Warsaw.[61] Cowles experienced a delay of five days in acquiring the necessary visas. Upon finally receiving the required paperwork, the Travel Bureau informed her that the border between Lithuania and Poland had been blocked. Her only chance was via Romania, where she needed to pass through France, Switzerland, Italy, and Yugoslavia. The issuing of new visas required an extra five days, and by the moment she was prepared to leave, the swift advancement of the "German Onslaught" had already heightened apprehensions over the continuing accessibility of the Romanian frontier.[62] The other American reporters who recorded the German invasion of Poland similarly encountered transportation challenges. After arriving in Rome late at night, Virginia Cowles flew to Bucharest early the following morning. However, upon her arrival at the Hotel Excelsior, she was

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[60] Cowles, *Looking for Trouble*, 313.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid, 314.

subjected to inquiries from the porters and waitstaff about France and England. They conveyed articulate empathy for the Polish population, accompanied by a resolute determination to distance their nation from the ongoing war.[63]

After arriving in Bucharest, Virginia Cowles encountered an abrupt decline into a state of emergency. The substantial deployment of Soviet forces near the Romanian border and conjectures over Germany's possible army buildup in Hungary escalated worry to a heightened degree. In crowded restaurants, the initiation of news briefings over loudspeakers compelled customers to cease eating, leading to a unified atmosphere of attentiveness marked by significant discomfort.[64]

Virginia Cowles initiated an aerial journey to Chisinau, where she saw Ed Beattie, who had arrived earlier that day. She had previously seen him in Czechoslovakia in the fall of 1938 when they were chronicling the cession of the Sudetenland to Germany. He then notified her that H. R. Knickerbocker and John Whitaker had entered the Sudeten areas and established their press headquarters in Carlsbad.[65] After her expedition in Poland via Romania in the fall of 1939, Virginia Cowles traveled to England deeply traumatized, significantly impacted by her indirect perception of the Polish catastrophe. She started her journey with an airline flight from Bucharest to Milan, boarded an express train to Paris, and ultimately proceeded to England.[66]

Ann Stringer's journey to Europe, including Romania, although considerably later, from 1944 to 1946, is pertinent to our topic. She and the other female reporters were originally under the control of the Public Relations Division and were warned that they were prohibited

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[63] Ibid, 314–15.
[64] Ibid, 315.
[65] Ibid, 317.
[66] Ibid, 318.

from visiting the front lines. This directive was subsequently amended. Consequently, women could qualify for overseas missions during World War II by recognizing their distinctions from males. Female journalists argued that they should be tasked with articulating the female perspective due to their elevated perceptiveness and anti-war sentiments compared to their male counterparts.

Ann Stringer, who worked for the *United Press*, disregarded orders to retreat, infiltrating hostile territory and becoming the first American to ascertain the Russians' presence at the Elbe River in April 1944. She hurried to Paris with the information. Meanwhile, her eyewitness narrative gained widespread attention. It was a source of considerable astonishment and consternation to everybody there. Ann Stringer found herself in the most uncomfortable position to convey the news, rather than a commander or an infantryman. The military commanded her to leave for Paris due to her failure to comply with directives aimed at ensuring her safety.[67]

She traveled through Hungary to reach Bucharest. She considered herself fortunate to share her provisions with the limited American personnel stationed in the city. In 1940, as Sonia Tomara of the *Herald Tribune* departed from the still-neutral nation, Bucharest had been plentiful in caviar.[68]

American women foreign correspondents were not only writing about their experiences, but they also represented the realities of war visually through photographs.

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[67] Julia Edwards, *Women of the World: The Great Foreign Correspondents* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1988), 5.

[68] Ibid, 163–4.

Innovators in the Realm of Photojournalism: Lee Miller and Margaret Bourke-White

An American authority figure, Lee Miller epitomized the true essence of a "Renaissance woman."[69] She has experienced several existences in various locales and has engaged in numerous occupations. Besides her roles as a *Vogue* model and subsequently a correspondent,[70] she was a gourmet chef, photojournalist, and manager of her photographic studio, and has been deemed as a muse not only to celebrated photographer and her mentor Man Ray and to renowned artist Pablo Picasso, but also to her husband, Roland Penrose.

In his illustrated book *Surrealist Lee Miller*, her son, Antony Penrose, observed that people who met Miller in the post-war years left with a distinct first impression of "a warm and friendly woman, intelligent, witty, but somewhat eccentric in her behavior." Those who could get to know her more profoundly discovered that she had a "darker side." After her experiences during the war, she had been suffering from despair, which had taken a "terrible toll" on her, bringing her to the verge of insanity. She was able to free herself from the primary hold that these horrors had on her, but they continued to haunt her like "shadowy tormentors" until the very end of her days. They manifested themselves as panic bouts of "egregious behavior" that caused her to become estranged from some of her "closest friends and family."[71]

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[69] "Lee Miller: Women at War," *The National WWII Museum, New Orleans,* March 20, 2024, https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/lee–miller–women–war, accessed July 15, 2024.

[70] For the representation of Romanian fashion icons in American *Vogue* see Sonia D. Andraș, "Interwar Romanian Fashion and Beauty in American Vogue," in *Romanian-American Negotiations in Education, Science, Culture, and Arts*, ed. Cornel Sigmirean, Sonia D. Andraș, and Roxana Mihaly (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2023), 127–62, http://www.editura.ubbcluj.ro/www/ro/ebook.php?id=3854.

[71] Antony Penrose, *Surrealist Lee Miller* (Fairley House and Gallery, 2019), 10–11.

Among her many lives, her work as a United States war correspondent during World War II was both inspirational and terrifying. As a professional photojournalist, Miller documented the war atrocities on camera. She studied at the Art Students League of New York and Vassar College. Condé Nast, the publisher of *Vogue*, discovered and appointed her as a model for the magazine, which was captured on camera by Edward Steichen in 1928. Miller soon decided to go behind the camera to complete a training program at Man Ray's Paris studio.[72] In 1932, she returned to New York to establish her studio, which yielded her significant success. Five years later, she reunited with her friends and met surrealist poet Roland Penrose in Paris. In 1939, Miller separated from her Egyptian husband, Aziz Eloui Bey, in Cairo and rejoined Roland Penrose, her future husband, in London at the onset of World War II.

In 1938, she traveled with Penrose through the Balkans, including Romania, to document the ongoing disappearance of traditional rural lifestyles due to industrialization.[73] Miller captured the essence of Carpathian village life and its rituals with remarkable sensitivity and attention to detail:

> They continued north to Bucharest, where Hari Brauner, the brother of their friend the painter Victor Brauner, organized a tour of Carpathian villages. Lee documented the notables, priests, peasants and gypsies of these small, isolated communities, and their time-honoured pagan rituals for bringing rain or fertility She photographed with care and sensitivity, as if the talisman of the captured image could somehow protect these innocent people from disaster.[74]

Penrose returned by rail from Bucharest, leaving his wife to a few weeks of solo travel before she returned to Aziz. He hurried to plan for

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[72] "Lee Miller: Women at War."

[73] Ibid.

[74] Antony Penrose, *The Home of the Surrealists: Lee Miller, Roland Penrose and their Circle at Farley Farm* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2008), 42. Photographs by Alen MacWeeney.

an English tour of Picasso's Guernica. The following year, the composer and music professor Harry Brauner visited him in London:

> Hari Brauner visited London with a troupe of Calusari peasant dancers, who nearly destroyed the floor of Roland's sitting-room with their crashing footwork. Among those seeing the Romanians off at Victoria Station was Beryl de Zoëte, a well-known authority on folk dance and an old friend of Roland's. When he heard she was heading for Egypt on a field trip, he jumped at the chance to join her expedition as a photographer, a role that gave him cover to visit Lee.[75]

Roland Penrose documented their experiences throughout the Balkan trip via visual representations and written accounts. Back in London, he diligently curated an exquisite picture book titled *The Road Is Wider Than Long* as an homage to Miller. In this album, he brilliantly captured her participation in ancestral customs during their stay in Romania. This unique work featured a surreal interpretation of love, combining the artist's memories and documented stories. It offers a compelling view of the personal lives of two artists and their evolving journey of exploration in a rapidly changing world. In 1939, Penrose traveled to Cairo to persuade Miller to leave her Egyptian husband and join him in London, presenting her with the first copy.[76]

Miller accepted an opportunity to serve as a photographer for *Vogue* at the commencement of the war in 1939, which was first rejected. As the male photographers enlisted for military duty, women took up a significant share of *Vogue*'s fashion and lifestyle coverage.[77] Miller's initial connection to fashion was not only a propellent for her career. In its transnational, globalized nature, fashion is informed by the need to spread ideas and trends that generate economic, political, and cultural capital. Sandra Niessen contended that worldwide fashion establishes

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[75] Ibid.

[76] Roland Penrose, *The Road Is Wider Than Long* (Chiddingly: Farleys House & Gallery, 2021).

[77] "Lee Miller: Women at War."

consistent forms and behaviors to develop noticeable links among people. Unlike traditional clothing, which is ethnographic, fashion includes Western clothing advancements.[78] Fashion and dress serve distinct purposes, with costumes as a specific dress category. While classifications may overlap, their interactions are akin to unstable chemical substances.[79] Miller fully embraced these ideas and continued to apply the same fluidity and constant innovation in her later endeavors. It is also important to note that, in a sartorial context, she was more interested in costume than fashion in her later photographic career.

For Ami Bouhassane, Miller's remarkable contributions to British *Vogue* (*Brogue*) and fashion photography from 1939 to 1944 are frequently eclipsed by her endeavors in the war's final year, during which she, armed with a war correspondent pass, journeyed to Europe and documented the Allied advance through vivid narratives and photographs, providing British and American *Vogue* readers with deeper insights into the actual events unfolding.[80] She intertwined fashion with war journalism, and as noted by Robin Muir, she was "a wartime fashion photographer."[81] Miller's career exemplifies how she transformed wartime adversity into strikingly realistic photography:

> Hers remains a substantial body of work achieved in a relatively short time frame and against a backdrop of increasing hardship and stifling regulation. But she would demonstrate repeatedly as *Vogue*'s war correspondent following the Allied advance from Normandy into Germany,

[78] Sandra Niessen, "Re-Orienting Fashion Theory," in *The Fashion Reader*, eds. Linda Welters and Abby Lillethun, 2nd edn (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2014), (150–55) 151.

[79] For a detailed explanation of the terminological distinctions focusing on Western perspectives, see Sonia D. Andraș, "Fashion, Dress, Costume: A Proposed Terminological Clarification in the Historical Research of Women's Clothing," *Anuarul Institutului de Cercetări Socio-Umane »Gheorghe Șincai« al Academiei Române* 24 (November 3, 2021): 194–212.

[80] Ami Bouhassane, Robin Muir, Amber Butchart, *Lee Miller. Fashion in Wartime Britain* (Farleys House, East Sussex: Lee Miller Archives, 2021), 17.

[81] Ibid, 21.

> that scarcity and deprivation spurred her to ever greater achievements. No other photographer earned such a showcase, momentous, haunting and ineluctably 'real.' Lee Miller gave *Vogue*'s readers a ringside seat at the theatre of war. 'Believe it' ran the headline in American *Vogue* accompanying her photographs from the Dachau and Buchenwald death camps.[82]

Amber Butchart suggests that Miller's photography for *Brogue*, under Audrey Withers's editorship, was crucial in transforming wartime demands into visuals suitable for the glossy domain of high-fashion publications.[83] According to Withers, while Miller "might prefer gunpowder over Paris," "she had allowed *Vogue* to survive and come out of the war entirely changed." With Miller's contribution, "*Vogue* no longer merely reported on fashion, but had the power, if it so chose, to change it, to make things happen."[84]

Following Miller's successful work during the war, she was designated as an official US Army war correspondent and given topics that aligned more closely with her objectives.[85] Miller "was following the war wherever her instincts took her."[86] She bequeathed an extraordinary collection of 60,000 distinctively creative photographs. Laird Borelli-Person's portrayal of the future war correspondent is thus significant:

> By all accounts, Lee Miller—the subject of an upcoming biopic starring Kate Winslet—was a remarkable woman. A renowned beauty, she was an accredited war photographer who covered the Second World War for *Vogue*, capturing in images, and words, the reality of combat. She was honest with her emotions, shared her rage, but also unexpected observations such as: 'A company of soldiers was filing out of St. Malo, ready to go into action, grenades hanging on their lapels like Cartier clips, menacing

[82] Ibid, 22.
[83] Ibid, 35.
[84] Ibid, 34.
[85] "Lee Miller: Women at War." See "Lee Miller's Second World War," *Imperial War Museums* https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/lee–millers–second–world–war, accessed July 25, 2024.
[86] Lee Miller, *Lee Miller's War*, ed. Antony Penrose (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 177.

> bunches of death.' Where others saw troops, Miller saw people, and the good and bad in them.[87]

Initially, Miller joined *Vogue* magazine as a freelance photographer, but "bored to the point of stupefaction" with taking pictures of "frocks and handbags," she started taking pictures of "the damage done by enemy bombs" in England: "Her surrealist eye clicked in automatically, and she produced one of her strongest folios of work." Miller's photographs focused on frontline combat and expressed compassion for soldiers and the injured:

> She filed about 35 rolls of film, but more importantly, the woman who had never previously written filed a full length assignment of nearly ten thousand words of the kind of reporting that established her domination of *Vogue* features for the next year and a half. She had penetrated to the furthest reaches of her assignment, visiting clearing stations close to the enemy lines, and her photographs show a strong sense of human compassion for the wounded and their carers. Lee was seldom interested in the Generals and the top brass of rear echelons – she wanted to be where the action was and she felt at her most comfortable with the ordinary soldiers – she valued the integrity and tough directness of the people who were doing the dangerous, dirty work and she identified strongly with them.[88]

Her next travel to Romania was as a *Vogue* journalist during the winter of 1946. Antony Penrose surmised that "Romania was her next bolt-hole" in the book devoted to his mother's brilliance. Miller journeyed through Romania's picturesque villages and cities, including Târgu Jiu, Brebu, Tismana, Sibiu, Brașov, Bran, and Baia Mare. Returning to Bucharest, navigating their old vehicle on the muddy and snowy roads became challenging. "I was rhapsodic about Romania," she confessed in a 1946 *Vogue* article. After her second visit, she expressed her thoughts and

[87] Laird Borelli–Person, "Everything You Need to Know About Lee Miller—in *Vogue* and Beyond", *Vogue*, 11 September 2023, https://www.vogue.com/article/everything–you–need–to–know–about–lee–miller–in–vogue–and–beyond, accessed May 6, 2024.

[88] Antony Penrose, *Surrealist Lee Miller*, 28–9.

photographs in *Vogue* in a spread titled "Roumania." Alongside her published works, her manuscripts housed in *The Lee Miller Archives at Farley Farm House*, East Sussex, England,[89] constitute an invaluable asset, as articulated by art historian and critic Adrian-Silvan Ionescu in an article featured in *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire. Arts.*[90]

Despite several challenging situations, she appreciated Romanian traditions: "They had swirling music, with patterns as bright as their costumes, and customs which were even more fanciful."[91] She felt privileged to be welcomed by King Mihai I and Queen Mother Elena on a Sunday afternoon. During her visit, she participated in an extensive discussion. Moreover, she took stunning images of the Royal Family in the grand Peleș Castle. She also had the chance to depict Dinu Brătianu and Iuliu Maniu, the two high-ranking officials in Sinaia. Corneliu Coposu, Maniu's personal secretary, was in attendance with his associates and party affiliates.[92] In Bucharest, they encountered the renowned musician and anthropologist Harry Brauner and his partner Lena Constante, a puppeteer and stage designer.

In a manuscript released by her son and biographer, Antony Penrose,[93] she detailed her experiences in Bucharest after Roland Penrose's leaving:

> I'd arrived in Bucharest rather vaguely from Greece, via Bulgaria, and really on my way to Warsaw, armed with a frightening packet of introduction

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[89] *The Lee Miller Archives,* established posthumously in 1977 by her son Antony, daughter-in-law Suzanna Penrose, and husband Roland Penrose, is maintained by the Penrose Miller family. It has been preserving and promoting Lee Miller's oeuvre for 42 years. See Bouhassane, Muir, Butchart, *Lee Miller. Fashion in Wartime Britain*, 17.

[90] Adrian–Silvan Ionescu, "Lee Miller à travers la Roumanie, l'appareil photo à la main (1946)," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art. Série Beaux–Arts* XLIX (2012): 137–60.

[91] Antony Penrose, *The Lives of Lee Miller* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2023), 156–7.

[92] Ionescu, "Lee Miller à travers la Roumanie," 137–60.

[93] See "Povestea cuplului Lee Miller și Roland Penrose, la Muzeul de Artă Brașov," a conference conducted by Antony Penrose at the Brașov Art Museum, in 2011. Source *Adevărul,* 18, February, 2011 https://adevarul.ro/stiri–locale/brasov/povestea–cuplului–lee–miller–si–roland–penrose–la–886749.html, accessed 25 July 2024.

> letters. Royalty and dictators and blackmarket exchange dealers […] smart black satin and pearl society and massive landowners. There was a letter from Surrealist painter friend in Paris Victor Brauner to his brother. With the greatest of luck I drew it from the grab bag. I never used the others. Harry, his brother, was a musician and researcher, busy packing his bag to go on a three month tour of his country with an artist named Lena and a recording gramophone and a crotchety fascist-minded old professor. They were going to travel by infrequent trains, hitchhiking and feet. I had my once super-sleek grey Packard, Arabella, and nothing to do. We followed the gypsies, camp by camp […] we scooted across the whole country for a wedding party […] we stayed days while witchcraft was being performed or devils exorcised from a barn […] when I'd get cramp from driving all night to catch a piece of magic to be performed at dawn in an ex-Roman settlement we'd limp from the car and dance like scalp hunting American Indians in the headlights of the car […]. We made documentary photographs of all the frescoes painted on the outside of the ravishing steep-steepled churches of the Bukovina province, and accepted for the institute the under-glass ikons which the churches might not destroy but were discarding in favour of chromos, oleos and plaster statues of saints en grande série from mail order catalogues. [94]

In 2014, the Romanian Cultural Centre and the Rațiu Foundation in London hosted the "Lee Miller: A Romanian Rhapsody" exhibition curated by Adrian Silvan-Ionescu to commemorate the esteemed artist. [95]

Lee Miller wrote in *Vogue* in May 1946:

> Except for the ugliness of the Palace Square and the adjacent bomb-damaged buildings, Bucharest looks much the same as before the war. One of our raids set afire and destroyed the Splendide and Park hotels as well wrecking the new palace wing. The Athénée Palace hotel was badly hit but has been reconstructed to one of the most luxurious and comfortable hotels in

94 Antony Penrose, *The Lives of Lee Miller*, 74–75.

95 *Lee Miller: A Romanian Rhapsody – Exhibition at Romanian Cultural Centre London in London," ArtRabbit,* 2022 https://www.artrabbit.com/events/lee-miller-a-romanian-rhapsody/, accessed July 25, 2024. Also see Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, "FOTOGRAFIE. Portretul României de Lee Miller," *Magazine Website, Observator Cultural,* August 14, 2014 https://www.observatorcultural.ro/articol/fotografie-portretul-romaniei-de-lee-miller/, accessed July 25, 2024.

> Europe (no hidden microphones any more, either) […] Since then, two earthquakes have brought more damage.[96]

She likewise portrayed the Bucharest nightspots:

> There are lots of night clubs, and two or three restaurants serve delicious meals but one usually tries to find little bistros in the side streets which specialize in charcoal-grilled meat and gipsy music […]. With an old friend, Hari Brauner, Director of the National Folklore Research Institute, I searched through many of the cafés, looking for an extraordinary gipsy singer, Maria "Maritza" Lataretu. I had met her years before when she was singing in an outdoor alleyway café between the station and the public baths. Then her clientele was made up of station porters and taxi drivers. Her small son played the guitar and her husband, the violin leader, had the trick of playing on a detached broken string as if it were still part of the instrument.[97]

The first meeting among Lee Miller, Roland Penrose, Maria (Maritza) Lătărețu, and Harry Brauner occurred in 1938. The Romanian singer's professional trajectory was in its initial stages at that period. Within his collection of interlaced surrealist poetry, photos, and travel narratives titled *The Road Is Wider Than Long*, Roland Penrose skillfully depicted the singer while she performed close to "North Station." The poems were accompanied by photographs illustrating a wounded Bucharest under King Carol II's dictatorial rule, with "white blocks in bandages" and signboards suggesting a contrasting representation of ordinary life, such as "Ionica Coafor" and "Mobila de Lux":

> we can only talk in whispers in the hotel
> the town is sick but no one dare say so
> Maritza up behind the North Station
> could cure it
> her green leaves
> the strength of her pigeon voice

[96] Lee Miller, "Middle–Europe Album: Romania," "Night Life," *British Vogue*, May 15, 1946, 208–9.

[97] Ibid.

heal where other music wounds
each note wounds the last heals
the porters the suburban peasant
the policeman and the minister's wife
all go to her
she gave power to the last dictator
and then killed him with a needle
the gold magnate
whose image is already painted
among the saints
will also die suddenly

Maritza is strong
the porter puts his soul
into the belly of her guitar
her understanding is his security.[98]

Roland Penrose's portrayal of Bucharest, marked by the confinement of undesirable people in "cellars," forced relocation, and the burning of their stores, seems to reference the regime established by Octavian Goga in 1937. The implementation of anti-Semitic policies marked the early phase of fascism in Romania. King Carol II later replaced it with a governmental system based on personal authority in early 1938. It is possible that the poet also alluded to the growing fascist and Nazi menace in Europe:

Every evening the shop burn

white blocks in bandages receive their guests
a rich organization fetches visitors from the
cellars and spreads them out in groups
tomorrow they will be driven to the next city
they see town the town sees them
they like it.[99]

Lee Miller's albums of photographs are also influenced by surrealism. Her pictures caught the moment in motion. Her albums of photographs

[98] Roland Penrose, *The Road Is Wider Than Long*, n.p.
[99] Ibid.

focus predominantly on people, their lives, traditions, and art, which she made known worldwide. Her photograph *Dancing bears with gypsy trainers*, taken in Romania in 1938, tracked with Brauner's help, prices start from €3,500–€5,000 at the Artsy Auction House.[100] Another famous photograph was set in a nomadic village where the residents trained bears to dance. Miller, who was suffering from fibrositis, underwent a distinctive form of treatment performed by a bear. Brauner used her Rolleiflex camera to capture the bear, which weighed about 300 pounds, as it massaged her. The photograph is also included in the 1946 issue of *Vogue.*

Another renowned photograph represented Miller taking a bath in Hitler's bathtub on 30 April 1945. Miller had taken up residence in the Führer's deserted Munich apartment on her way from the freshly liberated Dachau that morning. She was among the first to represent the horrors of the Holocaust in her *Vogue* photographs and articles. She set up her camera at Hitler's villa before getting into the tub, and *Life* photographer David Scherman snapped a picture while she was taking a bath, with Hitler's picture on the tub and her muddy, lumpy military boots on the floor. Over time, the image would gain notoriety as a fitting visual representation of the war's conclusion. On the same day, Hitler and Eva Braun, his new bride, committed suicide in a Berlin bunker across Germany.[101]

Lee Miller captured an image of the American photojournalist Margaret Bourke-White for an editorial in the January 1943 edition of British *Vogue* entitled "At the Other End of the Lens." The image represented the 97th Bombardment Group, 8th Bomber Command, England 1942. Bourke-White

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[100] Lee Miller, "Dancing Bears with Gypsy Trainers, Romania," Art Auction House, Artsy, 1938, https://www.artsy.net/artwork/lee-miller-dancing-bears-with-gypsy-trainers-romania, accessed June 10, 2024.

[101] Chris Wiley, "When Lee Miller Took a Bath in Hitler's Tub," *The New Yorker*, January 9, 2024, https://www.newyorker.com/culture/photo-booth/when-lee-miller-took-a-bath-in-hitlers-tub, accessed July 15, 2024.

was positioned under the wing of a B-17 bomber. Several months later, she departed aboard a comparable US Air Force aircraft as the first female photojournalist to get accreditation as a war photojournalist with the U.S.[102]

Margaret Bourke-White was one of the first staff photographers for *Life* magazine in 1936, supplying the publication with its first cover photograph. In 1941, Bourke-White landed in Moscow six weeks before the Germans broke their non-aggression agreement. Her wartime journalism led her to North Africa, Italy – where she faced intense gunfire and Germany, where she saw the liberating of Buchenwald concentration camp.[103]

When Lee Miller arrived in Bucharest, Margaret Bourke-White had already been there. She remained at the Athénée Palace as a guest from the fall of 1939 to the beginning of February 1940. In the hotel bar or lobby, she likely met Countess Waldeck and the "warcos," such as Cy Sulzberger, whom she mentioned.[104] The first foreign photojournalist to be granted permission to take photographs of Soviet industry during the five-year plan of the Soviet Union, Margaret Bourke-White, garnered widespread acclaim for her exceptional work. Additionally, she was the first American woman to work as a war photographer, and she was honored by including one of her images on the cover of the first issue of *Life* magazine.[105] She began her career as a photographer in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1927, where she was responsible for collecting images of industrial environments.

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[102] Lee Miller, "Margaret Bourke-White, 97th Bombardment Group, 8th Bomber Command," Lee Miller Archives, 1942, https://images.leemiller.co.uk/media/Margaret-Bourke-White-was-the-first-female-photo-journalist-to-become-an-accredited-war-correspondent-with-the-U-S-army-/paViHp6PjbliYyEGmOtqlQ..a?ts=CNw85BXQWoC7Mqub_hLmfab3BI0cJU-Q1D9CxQUEmmc.a , accessed July 10, 2024.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Margaret Bourke-White, *The Taste of War* (London: Century, 1985), 63.

[105] See Sean Callahan, ed., *The Photographs of Margaret Bourke-White* (Vancouver: Bonanza, 1972).

According to *Fortune* magazine, the remarkable quality of her photographs contributed to her selection as a writer for the publication. In 1930, she became the first journalist to be charged with the responsibility of chronicling the industrialization of Russia. As soon as she arrived back in the United States, she became one of the pioneering photographers hired by *Life* magazine. In addition to that, she used her camera to record the German attack on Russia in 1941.[106]

Bourke-White pioneered women's wartime activities in two ways. She was the first woman to participate in an American bombing mission and the first female war journalist for the American Air Forces. Both accomplishments were possible in the year 1942. She was well-known for her photographs and her writing. She published seven works independently, three of which were written with her husband, the famed author Erskine Caldwell.[107] They were preparing for their personal life together as the world fell apart. In September of 1939, Hitler launched an invasion of Poland, which prompted England to declare open war on Germany formally. It had been determined that the beginning of World War II had occurred. In October, Margaret Bourke-White was assigned by *Life* to travel to England and photograph the preparations the country was making for its armed forces. During the fall and winter months, she set off on a voyage that began in a darkened London and continued to Romania, Turkey, and the Arabian Peninsula. She captured stunning photographs of ordinary people and dignitaries from around the globe and embarked on thrilling adventures.[108] Bourke-White flew to the Buchenwald concentration camp in April of 1945, a visit reminiscent of Miller's experience. Her entry to

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[106] The New York Times, *The New York Times Guide to Essential Knowledge: A Desk Reference for the Curious Mind* (New York: St. Martin's Publishing Group, 2011), 1239.

[107] See Catherine A. Welch, *Margaret Bourke-White* (Minneapolis: Carolrhoda Books, 1997).

[108] Carolyn Daffron, *Margaret Bourke-White. Photographer* (New York: Chelsea House, 1988), 78.

the camp, the circumstances that prevailed there, and the drama that the victims of Buchenwald experienced were all chronicled by her.[109]

In December 1939, Bourke-White came to Romania. With the imminent threat of war, Romanians needed government permission to take even the simplest family portraits. She commonly found herself among individuals like "the prefect of police, a member of the ministry of propaganda, a military officer, and the city architect." Every time she tried to leave without this group's protection, the authorities quickly apprehended her. Despite obtaining formal permission to take photographs, none of the officers acknowledged her valid documentation, and on another occasion, she found herself in custody.[110]

When Erskine Caldwell's cables to "Honeychile Caldwell," and later simply to "Honeychile," reached Bourke-White in Romania, he was overjoyed. He also sent cables to England concerning "Child Bride" and expressed happiness to her. Bourke-White skillfully navigated foreign security regulations, outsmarting officials. She seemed to enjoy playing the role of Caldwell's innocent and defenseless child, concealing her incredible strength and resolve.[111] From her room's window at the Athénée Palace, she took photographs of Bucharest's contemporary architecture and its buzzing activity.

She successfully obtained permission to take her pictures and captured images of Nazi tank vehicles being filled with oil in preparation for Germany's imminent attack on Romania. While working in severe weather conditions, Bourke-White suffered frostbite on her legs. Medical

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[109] The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum houses the document that contains Margaret Bourke-White's account of the heinous acts perpetrated against the Jewish population at Buchenwald, Regis Gignoux papers, EHRI Partner. See https://ehri-project.eu and https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn523424, accessed August 3, 2024.

[110] Vicki Goldberg, *Margaret Bourke-White: a biography* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), 225.

[111] Ibid.

specialists advised her to stay in bed and warned that if she did not properly care for her injuries, she could risk permanent disability. She nevertheless hired a taxi service the following day and took photos from the vehicle's window. After her legs fully healed, she left Romania for Turkey in February 1940.[112]

The *Life* magazine issue of 19 February 1940 dedicated 12 pages to Romania, containing Margaret Bourke-White's photographic essays [113] and an article on King Carol signed by John Phillips.[114] Her contribution through photographic essays to the magazine was announced from the beginning of the *Life* issue. Under a picture representing her and her colleague Walter Graebner from *Time*, shown at a Bucharest's New Year's Eve party given by the American Military attaché in Romania. Their work was characterized as "a superb job of reporting Rumania in pictures and facts." The presentation highlighted that during their travels in Romania, they were always accompanied by a military officer who had to convince local garrison commanders that they had permission to take photographs.[115] Bourke-White documented industrial sites, including Ploiești oil refineries, tanks transporting oil to Germany, and the Malaxa Munitions factory, drawn to the complexities of military and civilian technologies.

She also focused on the details of contemporary urban lifestyle and architecture, skillfully capturing the Athénée Palace Hotel from various angles alongside images of people along Calea Victoriei and the modern buildings of Bucharest. Her motivation stemmed from a desire to capture the essence of life and the symbolic significance of urban spaces. These

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[112] Welch, *Margaret Bourke-White*, 82–83.

[113] Margaret Bourke-White, "Rumania," *Life*, February 19, 1940, 66–73. The following photographic essays are relevant in this context: "Rumania Has Germany and Allies Fight Deadly," "Oil Trouble. Hidden War in Neutral Balkans," "Russia Wants Bessarabia Back."

[114] John Phillips, "King Carol of Romania," *Life*, 19 February 1940, 73–78.

[115] "Life's Pictures," *Life*, 19 February 1940, 14.

locations included the Café, the illicit Black Bourse headquarters in the city's financial district arcade. She immortalized the Café and Macca passage, emphasizing the persistent shadows in this hidden location beneath the elegant arches.[116]

While working for *Life* magazine, she continued to distinguish herself as a pioneer in photography, namely in the "photo essay." An entire generation of photojournalists looked up to her as a model due to her extraordinary abilities and ambitious standards. Her area of competence was creating high-quality, precisely built images, demonstrating a specific concentration on patterns. Whether she was photographing cattle, agricultural equipment, or people who had migrated, she never failed to find aspects of splendor and grandeur in the subjects she was photographing. In addition to effectively convincing millions of people in the United States to embrace her point of view, she had a unique way of seeing the world, which allowed her to recognize features that were not apparent to others.[117]

In a media landscape predominantly governed by men, brave American women journalists were diligently working to capture and convey the harrowing realities of war through their poignant and compelling reporting. Their unwavering commitment to truth and storytelling sought to shed light on the devastating consequences of conflict, often at significant personal risk.

Conclusion

The chapter highlighted well-known American women war journalists who traveled to Romania during those turbulent pre- and war years.

[116] Margaret Bourke-White, "Romania," Google Photos, February 1940, https://images.google.com/hosted/life/c269f832e1ccfe2a.html, accessed June 15, 2024.

[117] Vicki Goldberg, *Margaret Bourke-White*, 13.

These women were lauded for their professionalism and bravery and applauded for their experience. Even if they did so at contrasting times, they all convened in the Athénée Palace Hotel, which had become an American press center and was comparable to other European luxury hotels, also regarding its symbolic significance, serving as an essential gathering place where ideas and narratives thrived during a time of uncertainty and conflict.

6. Commensality beyond Politics: Cuisine, Flavors, and News

The Evolution of Modern Restaurants and Cafés [1]

Eateries originated during the 19th-century *Ancien Régime* and then expanded as public venues by the emerging reforming bourgeoisie. A movement of democratization occurred in the realm of haute cuisine. Indicative of development and liberation, gastronomy and ceremony shifted from private grand residences to public eateries. Restaurants, bistros, bars, and cafés have become integral to contemporary urban social life.[2]

Restaurants in Bucharest during the interwar period also mirrored the process of advancement and modernization. This chapter examines how American war journalists' accounts throughout their European missions notably depicted the culinary practices and aesthetics in Romania between 1930 and 1940. In the late 1930s, American journalists gathered in Bucharest, still a safe location to await the upcoming conflict.

This chapter highlights the significance of food, covering its production, ingredients, consumption, and communal dining in restaurants. American observers agreed that sharing first-rate food in the high-end restaurants of Bucharest also symbolized cultural negotiation, interaction, and mutual comprehension beyond the flavors of *haute cuisine*. Gastronomy and the spirit of conviviality played a significant role in the portrayals

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[1] See Carmen Andraș, "Creative Tastes: Sharing Flavored Menus, Gossip and News in American Correspondents' Journeys to and from Romania between the Great Wars," *Anuarul Institutului de Cercetări Socio-Umane "Gheorghe Șincai" al Academiei Române,* Vol. XXVI (2023), 141–62.

[2] Bruno Girveau, *La belle époque des cafés et des restaurants*, Guides Paris/Musée d'Orsay (Paris: Hachette, Réunion des musées nationaux, 1990), 2–3.

by American foreign correspondents of the restaurants they visited. In these establishments, they gathered to enjoy fine meals, share knowledge, and exchange rumors, often before conflicts disrupted their experiences. The progress of warfare led to the decline of *cartes du jour* and the epicurean appreciation for taste in interpersonal relationships. Flavors, memories, and history were intertwined in vibrant heterotopias. This chapter explores a unique culinary theme, analyzing various theoretical frameworks surrounding food and commensality alongside diverse narratives shared by American correspondents.

During the 1930s and early 1940s, society suffered a decline in harmonious solidarity, leading to the cultural, economic, political, and occupational isolation of persons dining at restaurants. To substitute the sensory experience of consuming and appreciating meals, the war correspondents directed their attention to the exterior dialogue among customers of the restaurants. While the aesthetic importance of cooking declined, the emphasis turned to the practical and political aspects of community meals. The origin of this situation might be ascribed to the tension caused by wartime and the intensifying rivalry among different national, political, and military personalities in public spheres.

The correspondents focused on impoverished people suffering under German oppression and a global crisis, which diminished enthusiasm for the culinary arts. Characters such as politicians, officers, businesspeople, or diplomats motivated by avarice supplanted the *bon vivants* and the *gourmands*. In Bucharest, the sophisticated restaurants like the Athenée Palace dining room, Cina's, and Capșa's effectively exemplified this reassessment of the cuisine. This chapter highlights the significance of the stylish restaurants in interwar Bucharest, frequented by foreign officials and journalists and by Romanian intellectuals, politicians, diplomats, officers, and elderly nobles. Typically, they were those seeking wealth, looking for the most lucrative political trends, and possessing the financial

means to frequent these opulent public venues. Romanian-American identity, political, social, artistic, and cultural exchanges transcended conflicting interactions of national, cultural, political, or military groupings under the threat of war.

A Gourmet of the Press: John Gunther's Culinary Voyages

In American journalist and author John Gunther's dispatches monitoring the advancement of World War II in Europe, food and commensality were recurring topics. Gunther gained renown for his compilation of political, military, social, and cultural reflections on the war setting and significant portraits. His reports for American readers began with his book *Inside Europe* (1936). [3] The *Inside* collection comprises *Inside Asia* (1939), *The High Cost of Hitler* (1939), *Inside Latin America* (1941), *D-Day* (1944), *Inside U.S.A.* (1947), *Roosevelt in Retrospect* (1950), *Inside Africa* (1955), *Inside Russia Today* (1958), *Inside Europe Today* (1961), and *Inside South America* (1967).

In his *Autobiography*, Gunther stated that during the early 1930s, he was the Vienna correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News*, a highly regarded newspaper. He was responsible for covering Central Europe and the Balkans. He traveled the entire distance from the Adriatic Sea to the Golden Horn, responsible for nine countries (Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey), which he attempted to visit periodically. Unlike his journalist fellows,

[3] For details regarding John Gunther's career see Carmen Andraș, "Crossing the Borders of Cultures: The First Wave of American War Correspondents in Romania and the Transylvanian Case (1916-Early 1930s)," in *Crossing Borders: Insights into the Cultural and Intellectual History of Transylvania (1848–1948)*, ed. Carmen Andraș and Cornel Sigmirean (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut – Gatineau: Symphologic Publishing, 2016), 199–232.

Gunther displayed remarkable motivation and determination unfazed by the Orient Express's slow tempo.[4]

His international news columns echoed his "galaxy of countries" and his contributions to publications like *Vanity Fair*, *the Nation*, *the New Republic*, *the Woman's Home Companion*, *the Saturday Evening Post*, and *Foreign Affairs*. He gained recognition as a young man attuned to Central Europe and its challenges, ranging from dynastic conflicts in Romania to the Habsburg succession and the events unfolding in Prague. This extensive project and his contributions to the media greatly supported his later work, *Inside Europe*.[5]

Realities in Europe diverged from the expectations of the American reporters. They came from the United States during an unsteady worldwide rise, whereas Europe was plagued by poverty and fragmented by conflict. By 1939, the dispute between Americans who supported siding with the Allied cause and isolationists was fraught with animosity. The same argument caused division among American reporters. At the outset of his career, despite his strong opposition to the Nazis, John Gunther did not endorse participation in the European military conflict. All possibilities seemed unfavorable to him – either the Nazi rule over Europe, which he strongly detested, or the threat of war, which he equally feared. The danger of a global armed conflict was significant, with the risk that the Nazis could eventually emerge victorious.[6]

Gunther lived in Vienna from 1930 to 1935, except for his journey back home in 1934. Returning to Vienna, he promptly started work and did not foresee significant challenges. This exercise was intended to function as a "pacemaker" because he aimed to assess his emotional

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[4] John Gunther, *A Fragment of Autobiography. The Fun of Writing the Inside Books* (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1962), 3.

[5] Ibid, 4.

[6] Deborah Cohen, *Last Call at the Hotel Imperial: the Reporters Who Took on a World at War* (New York: Random House, 2022), XXII.

control. The experience was surreal. He enjoyed the simple pleasures of Vienna, finding solace in its charm, as his role at the "News" did not require an exhaustive twenty-five hours of daily work.[7] In April 1935, the *Chicago Daily News* relocated him from Vienna to London. He also devoted his efforts to his *Inside Europe* project, which aimed to provide a platform for human-centered rather than just political portrayals.[8] His chief interests covered a wide array of aspects:

> Attitude to religion, Attitude to sex, Attitude to fame, Attitude to money, Motivations; great decisions, Pet hates, pet likes, Ambition, What are his fundamental sources of *power*, Chief intellectual qualities, Chief moral qualities, if any, Defects, What does he believe in most, Relaxations, hobbies, Daily routine, method of work, Family background, Stresses in childhood, influences in youth, Chief turning points in career, Interests in books, music, art, if any, Health and physical condition, Friends, those closest to him; attitude to subordinates, Nicknames, Tastes in food and drink, Anecdotes, What has been his contribution, Danger of assassination, how protected, Who will succeed him.[9]

Through *Inside Europe*, Gunther conducted a series of journalistic explorations into various cultural spaces, or heterotopias, including Romania, which maintained an elusive yet recognizable vibrancy and resilience despite the ravages of war. Within the framework of World War II, the author was assimilating a geographically and politically fragmented Europe. *Inside Europe* encapsulates the essence of discovering new destinations, appreciating their individuality, and gaining diverse perspectives about them. Gunther's works, including accounts, interviews, and articles, establish heterotopias as channels connecting the internal realms of memory with the external realms of conflicts and traumas, safety, and insecurity, normalcy, and deviation, resemblance, and otherness, dissimilar

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[7] Gunther, *A Fragment of Autobiography*, 8.
[8] Ibid, 9.
[9] Ibid, 10.

yet equal in its constituent elements. According to Susan Sontag, conflicts, injuries, and traumas illustrate the belief that "war is an aberration," while peace is a desired "norm," proposing that a critical aspect of modern ethics is the belief that while war may sometimes be unavoidable, it is fundamentally an anomaly. Peace is considered standard, although fleeting, contrasting with the traditional historical view that often sees war as norm and peace as abnormality.[10] Gunther gradually reached this view despite his earlier pacifist, non-interventionist beliefs in light of the anguish and suffering endured by those oppressed by the Nazi reign of terror.

While following his pre-war and wartime journalistic routes, Gunther established a connection between the vanished private rooms of his residence (such as the dining room and kitchen) or his hometown (including streets, stores, sitting or strolling places) and the foreign public spaces such as hotels, restaurants, cafés, bars, clubs, or those in motion (such as ships and trains).[11] This detail is significant as this chapter explores establishments such as restaurants and mentions cafés and bars, where food and beverage consumption intertwine with discussing rumors, conspiracies, and political matters. Tastes, memories, and history are intricately interconnected within lively heterotopias. The *Inside* collection creates an alternative realm, corresponding to the heterotopia described by Michel Foucault in his pioneering work "Des Espaces Autres (Of Other Spaces)"[12].

The restaurant is a multilayered ensemble of components, where the preferences for food and beverages played a significant role in shaping

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[10] Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2003), 66.

[11] See Carmen Andraș, "European Itineraries: Travel, Censorship, and Propaganda in American War Correspondence (1918–1941)," in *Negocieri transatlantice. Cooperarea româno-americană în educație, cultură și arte / Transatlantic Negotiations. Romanian-American Cooperation in Education, Culture, and Arts*, eds. Cornel Sigmirean, Sonia D. Andraș, and Carmen Andraș (Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2024).

[12] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 22–27,DOI 10.2307/464648.

the identities of political figures such as Eduard Daladier,[13] as well as dictators like Hitler and Mussolini, whom John Gunther personally encountered and interviewed for his *Inside Europe*. Readers could infer that Hitler had no interest in literature or clothing. Seldom did he wear anything other than a conventional "brown-shirt uniform" or a "double-breasted blue serge suit," accompanied by the obligatory "raincoat and slouch hat." He showed little concern for friends and absolute indifference to food and drink.

Gunther attempted to dispel a widely perpetuated misconception about Hitler's sobriety or austerity, which was a kind of propaganda to conceal the lavishness of his assets. He abstained from both smoking and drinking, and he strictly prohibited anybody from smoking near him. His dietary habits were almost entirely vegetarian. He would have just a double plate of scrambled eggs at the meal presented to him by Mussolini. He drank coffee sporadically but infrequently. Once or twice a week, Hitler would commute from the Chancellery to the Kaiserhof Hotel, which served as the General Headquarters of the Nazi party before he acceded to power. During his visits, he would drink chocolate, leading to increasing references to Hitler's "asceticism," a designation that was not entirely accurate. Hitler exhibited virtually little characteristic of austerity. He consumed just fruits and vegetables, only those that a skilled cook meticulously crafted. Even though he lived modestly, his residence in Berchtesgaden epitomized modern opulence.[14]

Another autocrat, coined by Gunther "Bombastes Furioso" after the publication of *A Burlesque Tragic Opera* in 1810, was Mussolini. As a youngster, Mussolini, much like Hitler, had a humble upbringing and

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[13] Eduard Daladier, a French politician, held the position of Prime Minister of France and endorsed the Munich Agreement before to the onset of World War II. He served as Minister of Defense until May 1940.

[14] John Gunther, *Inside Europe* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1940), 5.

often had an overwhelming desire for food. He was raised in an environment of extreme poverty. In addition, Gunther noted a highly uncommon feature of a European diet since he did not have coffee until age twenty. Furthermore, "he slept on a bundle of hay instead of a mattress, and the bedroom in his birthplace, which has been made a museum, preserves this symbol of extreme indigence."[15] He enrolled in a religious school, like Stalin and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, upon his mother's request, despite his father's firm adherence to anticlerical beliefs. At nineteen, he sought refuge in Switzerland to evade conscription. Despite his constant hunger, he managed to sustain himself as a mason and a worker at a chocolate factory. He once took food from two Englishwomen at a park picnic but needed stamina for his nighttime exploration of socialism.[16]

In contrast, Daladier was a discerning gastronomy enthusiast with a refined palate for rich, high-quality cuisine and a penchant for smoking, primarily using a pipe. He consumed alcoholic beverages like a typical Frenchman and had an intense liking for a kind of absinthe called pastis. He was among the few French prime ministers with a strong affinity for sports.[17]

Mussolini maintained robust overall health throughout his tenure, which may be attributed partly to his strict adherence to a rigorous schedule. However, by 1939, stories circulated indicating that he was afflicted with cardiovascular problems. Soon after assuming the position of prime minister, another rumor emerged about his severe stomach illness. Hence, he consumed a minimal amount of milk and fruit. As he pointed to a "basket of fruit on the table," he admitted to an American interviewer that this was the key to his "continued health – fruit, fruit, fruit." He started his day with "a cup of coffee and fruit," moved on to "soup or broth and

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[15] Ibid, 236.
[16] Ibid, 236–7.
[17] Ibid, 148.

fruit" at midday, and then ate nothing but fruit into the night. He "never touched meat" but ate "a little fish" occasionally. His favorite activities were riding in the Torlonia Gardens, fencing, swimming, and hiking. He avoided alcohol and smoking.[18]

Food, nutrition, diet, and culinary practices, especially considering their ideological interpretation of rationality and hygiene with a pungent eugenic flavor, reflect influential people and illustrate the broader societal history.

The Social Appetite. Places where Food, Memories and Identities Are Negotiated

The physiological urge of hunger notwithstanding, food and eating include more than the mere fulfillment of biological needs. Furthermore, "social drives" influence the production and consumption of food. Food eating is not only necessary for existence but also a significant source of pleasure in life and the central focus for many social gatherings and recreational activities. Sociological analysis enables us to understand the social structure of food production and consumption by considering a "social appetite."[19] The term "social appetite" pertains to the social environment in which food is produced and consumed, impacting our dietary preferences.[20] The volume *A Sociology of Food and Nutrition: The Social Appetite,* edited by George Germov and Lauren Williams, analyzes the social context of food and nutrition by investigating the socio-cultural, political, economic, and philosophical elements that impact the production and consumption of food.

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[18] Ibid, 242.

[19] George Germov and Lauren Williams, eds., *A Sociology of Food and Nutrition: The Social Appetite* (South Melbourne and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 2.

[20] Ibid, 9.

Food, consumption, and commensality serve as mechanisms of socializing. For Corine Pelluchon, a meal symbolizes "sharing of nourishment" beyond exchanging commodities and encompasses a sense of "communion." In restaurants, people come together in a shared space, whether at the same table or separate tables, as seen with American war correspondents in Romania, to collectively experience and understand their connection to the outside world. Sharing meals generates a "privileged moment" conducive to "intrigue, business, and seduction" on multiple levels.[21] Gunther had a versatile and intricate personality. He was a perceptive analyst of the political, diplomatic, and military situation in early 1930s Europe. He was a connoisseur of hedonism, reveling in the exquisite pleasures of fine cuisine and exceptional beverages. He was not an ordinary glutton.

Brillat-Savarin emphasized the distinction between gourmandism and gluttony. It is more refined, an aptitude developed through social communication. In Brillat-Savarin's opinion, continual ambiguity exists between "gourmandism," accurately referred to as such, and "gluttony, or voracity." Consequently, the lexicographers should not be considered part of the exclusive club of academics who effortlessly consume a partridge wing and then rinse it away, with the little finger in the air, with a glass of Clos Vougeot or Lafitte. Brillat-Savarin criticized their oblivion of social gourmandism, where the refinement of Athens, the opulence of Rome, and the delicacy of France converge and form a unified entity, which, through meticulous planning, combines skillful execution with discernment.[22] He provided a professional definition of gourmandism:

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[21] Corine Pelluchon, *Nourishment: A Philosophy of the Political Body* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic. 2019), 34.

[22] Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, *The Physiology of Taste: or, Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy* (London: Peter Davies, 1925), 106.

> Gourmandism is an impassioned, a reasoned, and a habitual preference for that which gratifies the organ of taste. Gourmandism is the enemy of excess; indigestion and drunkenness are offences which render the delinquent liable to be struck from off the rolls. Gourmandism includes friandism, which is but the same preference applied to light, delicate, and unsubstantial food, to pastry and preserves, etc. It is a modification introduced in favour of the ladies and men who resemble them. From whatever point of view gourmandism is considered, it is deserving of nothing but praise and encouragement. Physically considered, it is the result and proof of the sound and perfect condition of the organs of nourishment. Morally considered, it denotes implicit obedience to the commands of the Creator, Who, when He bade us eat that we might live, gave us the inducement of appetite, the encouragement of taste, and the reward of pleasure.[23]

As a true cuisine connoisseur, Gunther could not resist indulging in delicious pleasures while reporting to the *Chicago Daily News* on the volatile political climate in Europe and the emergence of dictatorships risking a global catastrophe. Consequently, while conducting his research expeditions from the Vienna press headquarters to the Balkans, he made observations that may be classified into two main categories: firstly, politics for the *Chicago Daily News*, and secondly, fine cuisine for periodicals such as the *Esquire*. The first collection of facts would serve as the central focus of his book, *Inside Europe*.

"Always I had dreams of Europe," Gunther reflected on his boyhood recollections, which "must have started (my mother's influence) when I was a child." In the kitchen of the old house in Chicago, John's mother, Lizette Schoeninger, "would read Keats, propping her book open with one hand and stirring the soup with the other." She came from a German "cultivated" and traditional family. The women played bridge in their kitchen, surrounded by the smell of beeswax and coffee strudel:

> The women played bridge in the long afternoons, had heavy, well-polished silver tea sets, and their houses smelled of beeswax and warm coffee

[23] Ibid, 105–6.

> strudel. For Christmas they gave each other stacks of leather-bound books, and their trees glittered with hundreds of candles.[24]

The recollection of past meals was linked to the comforting atmosphere of his "maternal kitchen," ultimately shaping his European, namely German, sense of identity. Consistent with Leighann Chaffee, the connections between the senses and memory imply that our reactions to depictions of food resemble our reactions to an actual meal. The emotional significance of food is informed by imagination, analogy, and symbolism.[25]

Food is recurrently used in the process of personal identity development. It is wide-reaching since everyone consumes food, but it is also significantly personalized due to its cultural diversity and strong personal tastes. Although food is temporary and only exists in the present moment, individual thoughts and cultural influences can link it to the past and the future. According to Beth M. Forrest and Greg de St. Maurice, food can cross boundaries like state/province, rural/urban, social/private. It then moves through anatomical barriers from the lips and teeth, down the throat, and into the stomach for digestion. Despite integrating into the body's physical environment, it is limited by time and eventually exits the body through another threshold. From a "quantum physics" perspective and a "sociocultural sense," food is consistently present across all temporal and spatial dimensions.[26] It can stimulate memories and imagination beyond temporal and spatial coordinates:

> Because we often understand memory and imagination as cognitive processes, we tend to consider them as occurring at the level of the individual, as illustrated in a memoir (the etymology of which stems from the Latin *memor*

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[24] Cohen, *Last Call at the Hotel Imperial*, 7–8.

[25] Leighann Chaffee, "How Does Memory Impact Food Choice and Preference? The Role of Implicit and Imperfect Processes in Research on Food Attitudes," in *Food in Memory and Imagination. Space, Taste and Place*, ed. Beth M. Forrest and Greg De St. Maurice (London, New York, and Dublin: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 39–52.

[26] Forrest and St. Maurice, "Introduction," *Food in Memory*, 3–4.

> meaning mindful or remembering). One of the most referenced literary moments demonstrating the powerful way in which the physical, individual, and sensorial process of eating intersects with cultural, social, and the intellectual takes place when the narrator of Proust's *Remembrance of Things* Past nibbles on a small, sweet, shell-shaped cake dipped in warm tea. Sitting at the table, he is mentally transported not just across time, back to his childhood, but also across place, back to Combray. This passage in Proust's novel captures the complex way that food can stimulate memory and imagination. The narrative that follows is not just about the madeleine, but about his relationship with his aunt Léonie, his identity, and then so much more. Proust's account of the madeleine, of course, is perhaps one of the most iconic in food literature, but it is far from singular.[27]

Cuisine's distinctiveness may enhance a country's perception outside its political and socioeconomic circumstances. For individuals and social groups, "the constructs of food in memory and imagination" represent and solidify identity across numerous borders, not limited to geographical ones.[28]

In a sequence of articles focused on culinary preferences in various places and cultures, published in the *Esquire Classic* magazine, following the same paths outlined in his *Inside* book collection, John Gunther was prepared to disregard social or political crises when his sophisticated palate was taken aback. Similarly, in Bucharest in 1934, he claimed that Romania was the residence of the "royal scamp," King Carol, as well as the dwelling place of "fifteen million" impoverished peasants and of the "sturgeon." He believed one could despise and respect the monarch while empathizing with or shunning peasants while enjoying sturgeon, concluding that this was Romania's finest aspect. The next highest quality were the strawberries, "as big as lemons, fresh each spring from the Transylvanian hills."[29]

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[27] Ibid, 1–2.

[28] Ibid, 3.

[29] John Gunther, "Food Along the Danube," *Esquire Classic*, April 1, 1935, 128.

While in Bucharest, "a flossy town," he visited Cina, a "fairly de luxe establishment" and "the flossiest restaurant." At that place, he had a wide selection of high-quality meals: "bortsch (beet soup) either thick or thin," sturgeon, strawberries, and good wine, all for $2.00. The most "amusing" restaurant in Bucharest was "an eccentric Italian establishment" called *Finocchi,* named for its proprietor, in the "Passage Comedia." F. G. Finocchi di Sforza was "Maître diplômé de l'Art Culinaire Décoré par le Ministre de l'Industrie et du Commerce (Médaille d'Or)." Gunther's palate recalled "Signor" Finocchi for his distinct culinary expertise. The restaurant, run by an Italian chef, was distinguished by the photographs adorning its walls depicting the "crowned heads of Europe" to whom he served dinner and by its wide variety of "hot hors d'oeuvres." These were intricate and suggestive amalgamations of "egg, brains, herring, and Italian pasta," characterized by a "complexity and savour" that Gunther had hardly experienced before.[30]

The evocative scent of Italian pasta in the heart of Romania conjured a vivid memory of his companion, intricately linked to this unique gastronomic experience. Julius Cecil Holmes, or Jim Holmes for his contemporaries, was the first secretary of the American legation in Bucharest. He brought John Gunther to the restaurant with the first intention of appreciating the owner, indulging in his cuisine, and acknowledging his expertise in crafting exceptional "Old-Fashioned cocktails" unique to the Balkans.[31]

Henrietta H. (Allen) Holmes, the diplomat's wife, accompanied her husband extensively throughout his worldwide ambassadorial assignments. The locations of postings were Washington, D.C., Bucharest, Hong Kong, London, Marseille, Casablanca, and Tehran. Her husband's position brought her into contact with influential people, including Jackie Kennedy and

[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.

the Shah of Iran.[32] Being the daughter of a newspaperman, she inherited her father's aptitude and made valuable contributions to American periodicals by writing accounts about the places she visited. An example of such an article is "The Spell of Romania. An American Woman's Narrative of her Wanderings Among Colourful People and Long-Hidden Shrines," published in *The National Geographic Magazine* in 1934. The story was accompanied by visually striking pictures rendered by Wilhelm Tobien.[33] Visual texts in this context are crucial from a cultural standpoint, as visual culture transcends mere presence in daily existence. It fundamentally shapes daily experiences and is deeply intertwined with various human activities and the interpretation of fleeting visual cues. Human metaphorical thinking and social relationships, especially communication, are inherently connected.[34] Impactful imagery can hence affect social perceptions, practices, and relationships on a visceral level.

The narrative guides us towards a lesser-known but significant journey in Romania, starting with the exquisite Italian pasta John Gunther enjoyed in Bucharest under his friend's suggestion. Henrietta H. (Allen) Holmes embarked on many expeditions around the distinct parts of Romania throughout the early 1930s. The picturesque sceneries included both bustling metropolitan areas and isolated rural roads, "gypsy camps," "caviar fisheries," mountain enclaves, and families of shepherds. In addition to seeing lesser-known enclosed monasteries, she explored oil and wheat-producing areas. At each spot, she saw "sturdy folk" who

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[32] Kansas Historical Society Archives, *Allen-Holmes Collection Call Number: Manuscripts Collection 883*. Unit ID: 305637 https://www.kshs.org/archives/305637, accessed July 22, 2024.

[33] Henrietta H. (Allen) Holmes, "The Spell of Romania. An American Woman's Narrative of her Wanderings Among Colourful People and Long-Hidden Shrines," *The National Geographic Magazine* LXV no. 4 (April 1934), 399–435, https://www.flickr.com/photos/48199430@N00/albums/72157632826262465/, accessed August 2, 2024.

[34] Nicholas Mirzoeff, "What Is Visual Culture?," in *The Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 3.

firmly adhered to the joyous "costumes, dances, and customs of century past."[35]

She was captivated by the scenic beauty of Romania, where "East and West are so interwoven it is difficult to see where one leaves off and the other begins."[36] She traversed the recommended itineraries from Bucharest to the Danube Delta and proceeded to Moldavia and Transylvania. Exquisite photographs and vivid descriptions made her essay a poignant confession of love and reverence for Romania. While traveling to the Danube Delta, she explored the location said to be the source of the renowned sturgeon sampled by Gunther at the Cina Restaurant. She saw the fishery at Vâlcov, an area reminiscent of "a tiny Venice" due to its canals, which were under Russian control until 1918, when Bessarabia was integrated into Romania. She first entered the vast storage facility where the fish underwent a series of processes, including cleaning, sorting, ice packing for transportation to Bucharest and other consumption centers, and smoking or salting for preparation for export. She proceeded to the spacious "open market," where the fishermen assembled their "daily catch to be sold under the supervision of the State Fisheries."[37]

The pursuit of caviar began in the early morning hours, taking advantage of the sleeping sturgeon. Depending on the season, the fishing areas alternated between the Black Sea, the Danube River, and its Delta. When the boats returned at midday, they weighed the fish and extracted the caviar. She recognized that the maximum catch for the season could exceed 40,000 pounds, with sturgeon typically accounting for an average of 12,000 pounds. Usually, a harvest of 12,000 pounds of sturgeon would yield about 500 pounds of caviar. The average weight of a sturgeon is approximately 450 pounds, with the largest recorded specimen weighing

[35] Ibid, 401.
[36] Ibid, 399.
[37] Ibid, 414.

just under 2,000 pounds. During the peak season, roughly 5 percent of a sturgeon's total weight consists of caviar. The typical cost for "the little black eggs," a fish weighing 2,000 pounds in New York, was considered a substantial amount.[38] Forrest and St. Maurice noted that people occasionally use food as an "identity marker" that indicates "ethnicity and nationalism" in their personal narratives.[39] Romanian cuisine became synonymous with caviar throughout periods of peace and prosperity.

Before Gunther and Henrietta H. (Allen) Holmes visited Romania, Pearl Kennedy Roberts, an American writer renowned for her expertise in culinary art, had also tasted exceptional caviar in Bucharest in 1926 and admired restaurants such as Cina. She correlated exceptional cuisine with everyday living and refined preferences of the elite in the Romanian capital. She observed that in Bucharest, society would sit together for dinner at either eight-thirty or nine o'clock, adorned in "full décolleté and 'tails,'" and served "vintage wines and cuisine" designed to captivate the palate of the most discriminating gourmet in the country. She noticed that Romania provided its diners with a diverse selection of fruits, cereals, vegetables, and poultry fed on milk. Furthermore, the "succulent baby lamb" and "sucking pig" are obtained from its "abundant pastures." Within the repertoire of Romanian cuisine, she cited "iaurt," an essential element of their diet, ubiquitously included on the menus of cafés and restaurants. Not only did she find it very flavorful and wholesome, but she also endorsed it to extend human lifespan. She concluded that if Romania were one of those nations that prioritized cultivating ambitious individuals and those who were committed to their cause, the motto "Eat iaurt and live a hundred years" would be appropriate.[40]

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[38] Ibid, 423.

[39] Forrest and St. Maurice, *Food in Memory*, 2.

[40] Pearl Kennedy Roberts, "The Queen's Home Town," *The New Outlook* (November 3, 1926), 304.

She detailed other gastronomic delights of Bucharest's upper class, such as "Paté de fois gras," the most exquisite "Russian caviar," "langouste from the Mediterranean," and a delicious preserve called "rose jam," which was crafted by the fairies using sugar and rose petals "to satisfy the taste buds of the gods" in ancient Greek legends. These delicacies were among the popular offerings served on the tables of the affluent Romanians.[41] She also mentioned "tuica," a beverage unique to the region, prepared by distilling prune juice and having a delicious flavor. In her opinion, it was characterized by its gin-like hue and attributes of the potency of Satan. She concluded by providing a list of high-quality restaurants in Bucharest accessible only to Western tourists and affluent Romanians. Alongside the "salle à manger in the Athenee Palace," she named other restaurants that had French, Russian, and German features. Among them, she highlighted "Cina's" as a French restaurant that was often visited by the affluent clientèle. She described Capșa's as another well-regarded and well-liked but less formal French establishment.[42]

In keeping with Bucharest's in-between Eastern-Western character, Athénée Palace had transitive features that set it apart from the European hotels. Yet, it had similarities with them regarding its display of a conventional lifestyle measured by opulence and leisure. In 1926, Pearl Kennedy Roberts classified it as "the Ritz of Bucharest," referring to its design and furnishings that reflected the French Renaissance style. Moreover, the quality of service was exceptional, particularly for those who possessed a proficient understanding of the French or Romanian language. Additionally, the culinary offerings at the French restaurant were unparalleled. The writer concluded that there was a slight disparity in the quality of lodging provided at the Athénée Palace compared to other high-end hospitality establishments in Europe.[43]

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[41] Ibid, 305.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid, 304.

Years later, in 1938, coming from Budapest, John Phillips, an American *Life* photographer and a colleague of Margaret Bourke-White and David Scherman,[44] traveled to Bucharest. There, he met the police officer assigned to follow him "over caviar" at Capșa, "Bucharest's most exclusive restaurant," where "he made it clear that a favorable report on his part depended upon good will." John Phillips "easily convinced him by paying for lunch and handing him the receipt.[45]" In 1945, John Phillips returned to Bucharest, once again passing through Budapest. This time, he was accompanying Lee Miller, the war photographer and journalist for *British Vogue*. Following Romania's accession to the United Nations and its signing of the Armistice Convention with the United States, its background underwent a notable transformation in 1944. When Phillips and Miller arrived in Bucharest, Romania was governed by the Petru Groza Administration and was under Soviet influence.

Phillips walked along Calea Victoriei boulevard in Bucharest, which still resembled a mix of American automobiles, slow-moving ox carts, and barefoot pedestrians reminiscent of the pre-war era. He observed that the charming women who frequented the area were now absent, and the weather insufficiently explained their disappearance. He admired the stores that were full of merchandise. Among them was a Russian bookshop supported by the ALRUS association dedicated to improving relations with Soviet Russia. The books on display included literary works by Russian authors and writings by Pearl Buck, Upton Sinclair, and André Maurois. The British officials had leased a corner window of

[44] David Scherman, a photographer for *Life* magazine, had a close working relationship and friendship with Lee Miller. He captured an image of Lee Miller in the bathtub at Hitler's residence following his demise. At the time they set up the bathroom setting upon Miller's idea, both photographers had just arrived from Dachau, and Lee Miller's clothes were heavily soiled with grime and filth from the concentration camp. In the 2023 *Lee* movie with Kate Winslet in the titular role, Scherman's character was played by Andy Samberg.

[45] John Phillips, *Free Spirit in a Troubled World* (Zurich and New York: Scalo, 1996), 142.

Capșa, "still the leading restaurant," and he concluded that though "it looked shabbier" than in his time, "excellent meals were served in the private dining-rooms." He had lunch with a Romanian newspaper publisher after obtaining permission to skip a concurrent event. This event was a "spontaneous demonstration" marking the Anglo-American recognition of the newly established left-wing government.[46]

The American correspondents lodged at Athénée Palace, as per their usual practice. According to Phillips, the atmosphere remained unchanged. The bar was equally as busy. They could choose whatever breakfast dish they desired in their rooms, except for caviar, which was currently limited in availability. He noted that the Romanians appeared to disregard their devastating warfare casualties.[47] Phillips recalled when Miller walked into the Park Club in Budapest and sat at his table. According to him, she was a beautiful woman from her time, embodying the essence of an independent American with the physical allure of a Greek deity. She was the third correspondent from the Allied forces to arrive in Budapest. She was accommodated at the convent, specifically in the cell adjacent to John Phillips.'[48] With the appropriate Russian credentials provided by the "Kommandatura" in Budapest, Phillips and his driver, accompanied by Miller in her sedan, departed for Bucharest. At twilight, they arrived at the Hungarian border. There, the Russians, as the Hungarians lacked authority over their border, decided to return them to Budapest with the assistance of military personnel. Phillips believed their misuse of authority resulted more from confusion and lack of clarity than malicious intent.[49] But Miller was determined to continue driving to Bucharest, which she had visited with her husband, Roland Penrose, in 1938. After a car wreck, she was immobilized in Romania, but she profited from the opportunity

[46] Ibid, 409.
[47] Ibid, 408.
[48] Ibid, 401.
[49] Ibid, 407.

to create an incredible album of photographs dedicated to Romanian people and traditions.

Miller was a multifaceted person who consistently transformed herself and achieved excellence in diverse roles, such as a model, surrealist fashion photographer, war correspondent, and gourmet cook. She tackled every undertaking with unwavering commitment and an innovative flair, even in the face of physical limitations that prevented her from pursuing her lifetime profession as a photographer. Although her culinary skills offered her a new way to express herself at their family's charming Farley Farm House, they were rarely acknowledged in post-war England despite her other artistic endeavors. Ami Bouhassane, Miller's granddaughter, compiled her grandmother's recipes into a cookbook that explores Miller's life by examining the impact of food on her artistic creativity. The text demonstrates her shift from employing her photography to using food to establish connections with others, resolve previous encounters, and empower women. Miller's artwork augments the book, featuring over a hundred recipes and materials for the cookbook she would never publish.[50] Her son, surrealist artist, writer, and photographer Antony Penrose, asserted that "Lee was able to find solace in cooking," beneficial "for everyone's sanity in these gloomy times."[51] Becky E. Conekin linked Miller's portrayal of rural English household chores to the post-World War II view of women's roles:

> […] in a way Miller's turn to these domestic tasks in the English countryside perfectly fits the 1950s and pre-feminist 1960s narrative of a woman's role being in the home after the bizarre and terrifying circumstances of the Second World War in Britain.[52]

[50] Ami Bouhassane, *Lee Miller, A Life with Food, Friends and Recipes* (Muddles Green: Lee Miller Archives, 2022).

[51] Antony Penrose, *The Lives of Lee Miller* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2023), 191.

[52] Becky E. Conekin, "Lee Miller and the Limits of Post-war British Modernity; Femininity, Fashion, and the Problem of Biography," in *Fashion and Modernity,* eds. Christopher Breward and Caroline Evans (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2005), 39–62.

Furthermore, Gillian Joyce Stacey argues that critics of Lee Miller's culinary pursuits have mostly emphasized her post-war trauma, attributing her interest in cooking to a defensive response. In Stacey's opinion, this interpretation undermines Miller's ongoing artistic perspective and disregards her understanding of social and economic problems and modern experimental approaches to food. Stacey aimed to find Miller inside her own household life and examines her growth as an artist, from her exploration of taste during a period of economic hardship to her later focus on food as an artistic medium.[53] Thankfully, besides her manifold professional pursuits, Lee Miller's name is also connected to Romania through her cherished images of traditional civilization and conservatism as opposed to modernity.[54]

Miller was not the sole American female war correspondent who journeyed to Romania during World War II and stayed at the Athénée Palace, where she met other American correspondents, such as Robert St. John.[55] She also subsequently pursued culinary interests in the aftermath of the war.

Betty (Elizabeth) Wason departed for Europe in 1938, relying solely on *Transradio News* to publish her accounts on a "pay as used" arrangement, which offered no guarantee of payment. For a young lady of twenty-six, who stood at a height of just five feet and possessed fluency only in her native tongue, it was a bold and daring decision. She had no influential connections and had never engaged in objective news reporting. In 1938,

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[53] Gillian Joyce Stacey, *Lee Miller. Beyond the Muse. A very Modern Woman: a Woman of Her Time.* PhD thesis, University of Greenwich, 2017, 203. https://gala.gre.ac.uk/id/eprint/23435/, accessed August 12, 2024.

[54] For a comparative analysis of modernity and conservatism through women's fashion, see Sonia D. Andraș, "From Monitorul Oficial to Calea Victoriei: Decoding 1930s Bucharest through Women's Fashion," *Journal of Romanian Studies* 5, no. 1 (April 25, 2023): 27–54, DOI 10.3828/jrns.2023.3

[55] Robert St. John, *Foreign Correspondent* (New York: Doubleday & CO, 1957), 97.

Prague emerged as the prime destination, prompting Wason to travel there. Despite the Nazi takeover, Wason chose to remain in Prague to document the establishment of the new government. She joined Hungarian forces as they reclaimed the portion of Czechoslovakia that was formerly part of Hungary.[56] She was fortunate or foretelling enough to be in Romania when the leader of the fascist Iron Guard, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, was assassinated and in Rome during Neville Chamberlain's meeting with Mussolini. Although *Transradio News* appreciated her work, her salary was insufficient to support her, making her return home disappointing. CBS, however, offered less support. After deciding to return to Europe, Wason arranged her travel plans. She visited CBS before departure, where the news director suggested she connect with reporter William Shirer in Berlin. From then on, she diligently followed his reports.[57]

Over time, there were grievances regarding her voice: it was deemed too youthful and feminine and lacked the necessary authoritative quality. The question was, "Could she kindly locate a gentleman to recite passages from her written works?" Wason experienced a sense of betrayal. Despite her hard work and significant achievements, there were limited advancement opportunities due to CBS's predominantly male workforce and the societal norms of 1940, which did not recognize or foresee gender equality.[58]

Back to the war front, Betty Wason covered the German bombing attack on the outskirts of Athens in 1941 for CBS, which was not an easy task.[59] The departure of the few American journalists left in Athens was only authorized when German correspondents in the United States got

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[56] Nancy Caldwell Sorel, *The Women Who Wrote the War* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1999), 74.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid, 76.

[59] Ibid, 114.

instructions to leave. Wes Gallagher from the *Associated Press*, George Weller from the *Chicago Daily News*, and Betty Wason departed from Athens together on a standard Lufthansa aircraft. They were held in Vienna under suspicion of being spies until their identities could be confirmed and were transported between multiple prisons and then escorted by the Gestapo to Berlin via train. While Weller and Gallagher were let go, Wason was detained for an additional week, as she reported herself, "without any disclosed reasons, except that the police expressed a desire to gather further information about me." Harry Flannery from CBS intervened, and the Gestapo granted her permission to leave[60].

Returning to the United States, Wason authored *Miracle in Hellas*, a book recounting her experiences in Greece. She went on to write an additional twenty-three books, several of which were focused on the subject of cuisine, among which *Cooking Without Cans* (1943), *Dinners That Wait* (1954), *Cooks, Gluttons & Gourmets: A history of cookery* (1962), *The Art of Spanish Cooking* (1963), *Bride in the Kitchen* (1964), *The Art of Vegetarian Cookery* (1965), *The Art of German Cooking* (1967), *The Language of Cookery* (1968), *Betty Wason's Greek Cookbook* (1969), *The Everything Cookbook* (1970). She continued her work in broadcasting, hosting a talk show in Washington, serving as women's editor for *Voice of America*, and moderating "Author Rap Sessions" on NBC for six years.[61] Betty Wason was attracted by a selection of Romanian recipes and had the opportunity to sample authentic Romanian cuisine. In her *Encyclopaedia of Cheese and Cheese Cookery: a Salute to Cheese*, she included the Romanian sheep cheese known as "Telemea," along with other European varieties of cheese. She believed that American cheesemakers were trying to replicate these European cheeses:

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[60] Ibid, 116.

[61] Ibid, 391.

> As in the production of domestic wines, American cheesemakers tended to copy European types instead of inventing their own cheeses. It is now possible to purchase domestic imitations of such foreign cheeses as Telemi, a soft Rumanian sheep cheese, Italian Fontina, German Kimmelkise, English Stilton, Norwegian Ngkkclost, or Swedish caraway-seed Bondost, to say nothing of Limburger, Gouda, Brie, and Gorgonzola. Some of these copies compare favorably with the originals; others are sorry substitutes. Although this vast array of cheese varieties is impressive and copying cheese types from other countries is not by any means restricted to American producers, it seems a shame that, with all this inventiveness, Americans have not come up with more truly original cheeses — or at least have not given new names to those cheeses that, like Liederkranz, began as imitations but in reality have their own individual goodness.[62]

Wason mentioned "Brindza," a type of cheese created in Romania like Greek Feta and produced in the Balkans using sheep or goat milk. Some types of cheese are preserved in brine, such as Feta, while others are compressed with layers of pine bark, resulting in a distinct resinous taste. She mentioned it was used to prepare the Romanian culinary specialty, "mamaliga."[63] She also mentioned "Kashkaval," a phonetic rendition of the Romanian word "cașcaval." She noted that this cheese was a variation of Caciocavallo, typically made from sheep's or goat's milk and was commonly found in Greek or Romanian cuisine, with an initially creamy texture but firm enough to be grated as it aged and a subtle smoky taste. She has extensively recorded cheese varieties in other languages, including "Kashcavallo, Kachavelj, and Katschkawalj," from the Balkans and the Near East.[64]

Her gastronomy publications are extensively documented through written sources and subjective experiences from her trips. Betty Wason claimed that throughout her life, she had had a strong affinity for cheese.

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62 Betty Wason, *Encyclopedia of Cheese and Cheese Cookery: a Salute to Cheese* (New York: Galahad Books, 1975), 38. [1st edn, *A Salute to Cheese (*New York, Hawthorn Books, 1966)].

63 Ibid, 49.

64 Ibid, 57.

However, it was not until she conducted the research for this book that she realized the intricate and captivating nature of cheese. Most of the information presented on the subsequent pages has been sourced from books such as André Simon's *Cheeses of the World*, which the author relied upon extensively. She received a book titled *The Roquefort Adventure* by Henri Pourrat just before embarking on a journey to Europe. She intended to visit the renowned caverns on Mont Combalou in southern France. Wason's fervent fascination with archaeology proved invaluable in exploring the early origins of cheese production. During her visits to various museums in Spain, she encountered cheese-making tools dating back to the Bronze Age. Her library contained archaeology books and translations of classical Greek and Roman writings, providing numerous intriguing anecdotes about cheese in ancient times.[65]

Wason's findings indicate that nearly every nation on Earth has distinct varieties of cheese, which does not apply to Asian and African countries that do not have minimal domesticated animal populations, as they do not provide enough milk for cheese production. During her journeys, she occasionally encountered cheeses of exceptional quality that captivated her taste buds. Curious about their names, she discovered these cheeses were unique to the local region and lacked specific labels. The farmer's techniques and the season influenced their distinct flavors and textures. Only cheeses that could be mass-produced in factories to meet regular requests from brokers and that meet strict inspection criteria enforced by customs officials to avoid the spread of illness were included in the global market.[66] Wason's culinary books provided a distraction from the intense ordeals of war and the disappointment of one's career, allowing for an examination of the enduring aspects of human existence that extend beyond historical and political circumstances.

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[65] Ibid, 9–10.

[66] Ibid, 43.

What the American Correspondents Did Not See in Romania: Women, Diet and Hygiene

Nutrition and diet functioned to promote unity among individuals, transcending their differences and serving as a vehicle for political propaganda. During the first decades of the 20th century, American scientists linked nutrition to genetics, hygiene, and eugenics, particularly emphasizing women's education in this domain.[67] Dr. Aurel Voina, a Rockefeller scholar specializing in eugenics, linked rational diet with eugenics, genetics, and hygiene. He argued that nutrition is connected to personal hygiene, education, and hereditary temperament or disposition. Voina further developed his theoretical framework by emphasizing the role of the endocrine glands and their hormonal discharges in influencing temperament and nutrition.[68] It was just a single step to the radical notions of social selection.

American correspondents noticed that from the late 1920s until the onset of World War II, Romania experienced a significant shift towards right-wing ideologies and, even if the American journalists did not particularly mention it, an increasingly heavy reliance on eugenics and biopolitics in social and political discourse. At a more profound level, beyond the American observers' direct, pragmatic interests, even in its connection to rational nutrition and hygiene, eugenics has been a contentious notion since its inception. For historian Marius Turda, it is frequently linked to advocating for racial purity, especially in its Nazi manifestation. Indeed, interwar eugenics was treated as a legitimate scientific method and a marker of advancement despite a variety of

[67] See Faith M. Williams, "Nutrition in a Eugenics Program," *Journal of Heredity* 31, no. 12 (December 1940): 521–26, DOI 10.1093/oxfordjournals.jhered.a104832.

[68] Aurel Voina, *Alimentația rațională în împrejurările actuale,* Colecția Sănătății 1 (Bucharest: Gorjan, 1947), 76–7.

interpretations contingent upon ideological convictions[69]. The debate was starkly divided as cleanliness and hygiene intertwined with racial and national identity, especially in Romania.[70] The discourse revolved around whether eugenics should emphasize social and educational enhancements (the Latin approach) or adopt more extreme social and racial selection methods (the Anglo-Saxon approach).[71] The German interpretation of eugenics became widespread in South-East Europe due to its alignment with prevailing intellectual currents.[72] But Romania's eugenic meal course was not singular.

US influence on Romanian eugenics was significant regarding social and personal health, diet, and hygiene. American businesses, Hollywood, beauty pageants, and funding for Romanian eugenicists all played a role in shaping Romania's cultural and ideological direction. The Rockefeller Foundation provided financial aid and scholarships to young people studying applied sciences, health and hygiene, and sociology. The provision of support substantially influenced Romanian individuals academically and culturally, ultimately shaping their philosophical outlook. As a result, numerous individuals were inspired to pursue careers in statistics, medicine, and science.

In many cases, the government sent these returning students and fellows abroad to study in areas considered necessary for what many interwar Romanian eugenicists viewed as a process of national or ethnic hygienization.[73] Iuliu Moldovan, who became president of the ASTRA

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[69] Marius Turda, *Modernism and Eugenics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 1–2.

[70] Ibid, 76.

[71] Ibid, 98.

[72] Idem, "Crafting a Healthy Nation: European Eugenics in Historical Context," in *Crafting Humans: From Genesis to Eugenics and Beyond*, ed. Turda (Göttingen: V & R Unipress, National Taiwan University, 2013), 114.

[73] Irina Nastasă-Matei, *Educaţie, politică și propagandă. Studenţi români în Germania nazistă* (Cluj-Napoca: Școala Ardeleană, 2016), 51.

Association,[74] was one notable eugenicist influenced by these partnerships. These collaborations aimed to establish a national health and hygiene system with well-funded institutions focused on eugenic principles, particularly in developing nations in Central and Eastern Europe like Romania.[75]

The formal discourse gradually lost its focus on preserving political and social nuances, allowing for the direct and unambiguous implementation of specific policies without artifice or subtle manipulation. This may explain why the popularity of events such as *Miss Romania* beauty pageants drastically declined, just like caviar, as the world marched into war. As a fundamental component of the prevailing system, eugenicists no longer concealed their political agenda. In the updated Romanian translation and eighth edition of his hygiene manual, German physician H.W. Siemens drew a parallel between eugenics and racial hygiene, emphasizing their importance in heredity and population politics.[76] To enhance their respectability and credibility, all published eugenicists were portrayed as esteemed doctors affiliated with equally prestigious institutions, ensuring the legitimacy of their message.[77]

Radical ideologies garnered favor on the international geopolitical scene, particularly under fascist governments and among far-right sympathizers, with governments adopting increasingly authoritarian and

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[74] Asociația Transilvană pentru Literatura Română și Cultura Poporului Român (The Transylvanian Association for Romanian Literature and the Romanian People's Culture), founded in 1861, still in function today.

[75] Maria Bucur, *Eugenics and Modernization in Interwar Romania* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002), 60.

[76] Hermann Werber Siemens, *Elemente de ereditate. Eugenia și politica populației* (*Elements of Heredity. Eugenics and Population Politics*), trans. Ștefan Drăgănescu and G Stroescu, 8th edn. (Bucharest: Triajul, 1937).

[77] See Voina, *Îngrijirea tenului* (Bucharest: Cugetarea – Georgescu Delafras, 1938), for an analysis of the connection between eugenics, Darwinism, and social cleansing as an introduction to a skincare manual. Voina was one of the most prominent interwar Romanian Rockefeller scholars.

paternalistic stances.[78] Romanian women were advised and anticipated to adhere to conventional male authority.[79] This situation mirrored the Italian fascist regime urging women to contribute to the nation and the state as integral components of the national ideology.[80] From a Foucauldian perspective of power and coercion, the inherent trait of femininity becomes a mere artifice.[81] However, as Sandra Lee Bartky noted, Foucault unknowingly perpetuated Western sexism by failing to discern the feminine experience when dissecting male and female "docile bodies" and their oppression. Gender disparities in personal space management often lead to women being cautioned against certain behaviors and encouraged to reduce their physical visibility from an early age, perpetuated by derogatory terms like "loose woman."

Women historically faced pressure to conform to masculine beauty standards, leading to experiencing and being blamed for their shame and limited resources.[82]Individuals who upheld the status quo apprehended increased competition and systemic disturbances, competing in moral and paternalistic arguments. Women's participation in public life challenged the core of the patriarchal system. The breakdown of family life and social rank distinctions was often attributed to young, naive women succumbing to what Elizabeth Wilson called "bestial excess," perceived as a pervasive threat[83]. Like gastropolitics, pursuing hygiene and physical perfection became the ideological norm of totalitarian modernity.

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78 Chris Rohmann, *The Dictionary of Important Ideas and Thinkers* (London: Arrow, 2002), 271.

79 See Ovidiu Comșia, "Biologia familiei VI. Din biopolitica familiei (Family Biology VI. From the Family Biopolitics)," *Buletin eugenic și biopolitic (Eugenic and Biopolitical Bulletin)* 7, no. 1–2 (February 1936): 32–37.

80 See Victoria De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

81 Sandra Lee Bartky, "Foucault. Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power," in *Feminist Social Thought: A Reader*, ed. Diana T. Meyers (New York: Routledge, 1997), 95.

82 Ibid, 97–100.

83 Elizabeth Wilson, *The Contradictions of Culture: Cities, Culture, Women* (London and Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2001).

Gastropolitics. Included or Excluded from Cuisine

In 1937, while documenting the Spanish Civil War in Madrid, under the falling bombs, Virginia Cowles stated: "I have discovered that food was much of a preoccupation than a danger." When a donkey cart loaded with lettuce or bread traversed the streets of Madrid, a hungry crowd eagerly gathered around it.[84] People's perspectives on food and eating may differ due to their historical backgrounds, even in the same physical space, as Forrest and St. Maurice pointed out, because "when thinking about food and identity, time and space matter."[85] In the early 1940s, people enjoyed food and conversation, but as the decade progressed and war loomed, attention shifted to the soldiers on the frontlines. Social needs took precedence over individual culinary preferences, diminishing the significance of fine dining. Dining served a greater purpose: making history, as the harsh realities of authoritarianism and war overshadowed the elegance of art and human experience. External forces of exclusion, such as power, interest, politics, and divergence, shifted the focus from the food on the tables to the people seated around them, turning dining from an aesthetic experience into a pragmatic communal endeavor.

Because persons might be "partially included" or "partially excluded," Susanne Kerner argues that "exclusion from and inclusion in commensal events need not be absolute categories." In addition, due to specific "gastropolitics," "special commensal occasions encompass persons who do not usually eat or drink together," in comparison with everyday meals, which might be established around a fairly "stable core of participants."[86]

The American correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News*, Robert St. John, noted that Bucharest remained carefree and joyful in the spring of

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[84] Virginia Cowles, *Looking for Trouble* (London: Faber & Faber, 2022), 18.

[85] Forrest and St. Maurice, *Food in Memory*, 4.

[86] Susanne Kerner (Ed.), *Commensality: From Everyday Food to Feast* (London, New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 3.

1940. "Bucharest thought that somehow the storm would pass her by; that with a little luck she would be able to buy or bluff or wiggle her way out of trouble."[87] Their everyday lives and eating habits mirrored this attitude, with Cina and Capșa serving as their go-to spots. The people of Bucharest continued to consume unhealthy amounts of meat (three or four types in every meal for the well-off) and alcohol (scotch whiskey, German lager, French wines, and the local plum brandy, tsuica). They were, hence, giving in to their sensuality:

> In the heart of the business district peasant women, their feet wrapped in torn-up burlap sacks in lieu of shoes, were sweeping manure from the streets with crude brooms made from the twigs of trees, but at a fancy grocery store called the Dragomir Consumul, a few blocks down Calea Victoriei from the Royal Palace, elegant Rumanian ladies were jostling each other to get waited on first at the caviar bar, where they bought the sticky black fish eggs by the pound or the kilo instead of by the ounce or the gram, as is the custom elsewhere in the world, and in Tchina's and Capsha's, the two restaurants which claimed to turn out meals the equal of any in France, diners were lingering over their luncheon, as they had always done, from noon until sometimes five in the afternoon, and enjoying every minute of it.[88]

At Capșa's, the upscale restaurant located on Calea Victoriei, customers could order dinner over the phone, even in a different city. The order was then delivered by air and included a selection of dishes such as caviar, canned asparagus (which the Romanians regarded as the pinnacle of all culinary delights), smoked salmon, three or four types of meat, several types of poultry, vegetables, desserts, salads, cigars, and the wine.[89]

Commensality still served as a communal endeavor that facilitated interpersonal interaction and fostered a sense of ease among individuals.

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[87] St. John, *Foreign Correspondent*, 77.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid, 148.

During wartime, the significance of communal meals in public spaces decreased, becoming primarily associated with political and military issues. In the Fall of 1940, the Athénée Palace restaurant served as one of the few public venues where Nazi officials, American journalists, diplomats, and spies from the Western countries, the Axis powers, and the Soviet Union could gather among adjacent tables to exchange information or engage in discussion.[90] The society at the Athénée Palace restaurant was diverse, even between members of the same national community. People from the same category were allocated to several tables based on nationality, occupation, social standing, or financial status. Unlike other American journalists who portrayed the hotel restaurant during that time, Countess Waldeck did not highlight any conflict between Germans and representatives from different nations, nor between Nazi supporters and their opponents. She concentrated on the German clientele's refinement and politeness, receiving lavish banquets in their honor without offending others. Such events arranged by Romanian restaurants to cater to the German elite and officials were inherently politicized.

As Brian Hayden noted, "feasting" has always been regarded as a significant tactic employed by ambitious individuals to attain financial, social, and political rewards or control."[91] Countess Waldeck's account of the event was carefully crafted by those in power and individuals seeking social advancement. The large restaurant, adorned in shades of red and gold, was temporarily closed for the summer season. An elongated table, attractively decorated with flowers, awaited the gatherings of Romanian generals and their German counterparts. The unsurprised

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[90] Robert Kaplan, *In Europe's Shadow. Two Cold Wars and a Thirty-Year Journey Through Romania and Beyond* (New York: Random House, 2016), 45. See for or the oppressive communist regime in Romania Dennis Deletant, *In Search of Romania: A Memoir* (London: Hurst & Co, 2022).

[91] Brian Hayden, *The Power of Feasts: From Prehistory to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 1.

Anton, the seasoned Austrian head waiter who had dedicated his whole life to the Athénée Palace, stood at the open foldable door as the entrance was reserved solely for German generals. A disturbance in the entrance hall caused those in the lobby to pause their conversations and drinks momentarily. The German officers arrived, and the atmosphere became so calm among the yellow marble columns that one could hear the faint metallic clanking that accompanied the officers' every step as they made their way to the designated green salon. For a moment, the only sound was the sharp clicking of heels as they performed the Nazi salute to the various Axis embassies, along with Rumanian military officials and dignitaries whom the German military attaché had previously introduced to them.[92]

The scenario is remarkable, reminiscent of a Hollywood film when attractive officers disregard a stunning leading lady instead of being admired. Without the author's irony, the situation would have been uncomfortable. Everyone stormed inside the "red and gold restaurant" upon the officers' arrival. The area was spacious, sometimes causing people to get disoriented. It was occupied entirely, with not even the final table available. On top of all that, Princess Elisabeth Bibescu was present. She knowingly chose the table next to the officers and placed herself so that her back was exposed to them. While this gesture was admirable for its impact, she could have just as quickly had dinner in bed. Herbert Henry Asquith's exceptional daughter was largely overlooked, especially by Germans, except for a few English and Americans.[93]

One day, Countess Waldeck decided to sit at a table with an American correspondent, who had a sense of tension in a scenario that evoked memories of Nazi Germany's annexation of Norway in April, where the

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[92] Rosie G. Waldeck, *Athene Palace Bucharest. Hitler's "New Order" Comes to Rumania* (London: Constable, 1943), 181.

[93] Ibid, 184.

Germans had arrived as conquerors "while here they were at least nominally guests." The journalist stated that such was the nature of the Europeans, akin to infants, who offer joyous laughter to the abductors who take them on a journey. After savoring "a few spoonfuls of his ciorba," he thoughtfully observed:

> Of course, later they get frightened and cry, but chiefly because meanwhile we Americans have got hold of the case and raise hell about aggression and the wickedness of it all. Otherwise they might have lived happily ever after under the Germans, really like babies at the kidnappers.[94]

On another occasion, Waldeck was drawn to a "complex odour" that lingered around the "strategic table" of the Romanian ancient nobility, former cabinet ministers, diplomats, and generals, whom she referred to as "the Old Excellencies:" "the vivid scent of Turkish coffee coming from the small, handleless cups and of the Turkish cigarettes which the Old Excellencies smoked endlessly." The distinctive aroma of "toilet water" and Arabian perfume's "sweet smell" mixed in with the smoke. The most significant was the unique aroma of the "copper-colored liquid" served in their cocktail glasses, the "amalfi." Waldeck popularized the Amalfi cocktail in the 1930s by describing its Romanian adaptation, which included substituting Limoncello with a mixture of vermouth and *Țuica*.[95]

Determining the true political allegiance of Countess Waldeck was quite a challenge. The amalgamation of her German, Jewish, and American heritage elicited suspicion and distrust from all those she interacted with despite her elegance and impartiality. Hence, The Southern Jewish Weekly in the United States saw Waldeck's Athene Palace as a "negative influence," highlighting that "Countess Waldeck, commonly known as Rosie Goldschmidt, possesses a mindset that is unfamiliar to liberal individuals in America:"

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[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid, 30.

> She certainly is not pro-Nazi, since she is non-Aryan, but she glamorizes the Nazi agents and propagandists whom she met in Bucharest. – Perhaps it was the woman in her that made her seek the friendship of such Nazi fifth columnists as Edit Coler, the modern Mata Hari planted by Goebbels in Bucharest's most fashionable hotel as a "journalist." – Perhaps it was mere woman's curiosity to pal around with a Nazi general and other Nazi agents. – It seems, however, that these people left a distinct mark on the mind of the worldly countess Waldeck. – She completely forgets that were she in Germany today, the Edit Colers and the Neubahcers, and the other Nazi intellectuals with whom she struck up friendship in Bucharest would have been the first to treat her the way the Nazis treat all non-Aryans. – Impressed with the Nazi economic commissar for the Balkans, she serves as a fine tool in his hands by conveying practically without any critical remarks, his views in a full chapter 1 of her book. – On the other hand Madame Lupescu is to her a product of "Jewish greed for money.[96]

Colonel Gerstenberg, the German Air attaché and head of the German Military Intelligence in Bucharest, along with other representatives of German industries, bank managers, and German oil corporations, who showed up more European than German, were seen by Countess Waldeck as living evidence of Hitler's nuanced approach to "bourgeois capitalism." A second group of Germans, seeming less cosmopolitan but much more affluent, was also there. They were "Nazi party officials and Gestapo agents, stationed in Bucharest for a temporary survey"[97]. The Romanian side of the restaurant was occupied by "diplomats, officers, politicians, businessmen, aristocrats and other "old Excellencies." Amongst these two client groups were "American, British, French or even Russian journalists, diplomats, spies and businessmen." [98]

Despite the carefully measured dislikes and animosities among the different ethnic, political, and military groups, the Countess emphasized the refinement and courtesy of the German clientele, whom she saw as

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[96] *The Southern Jewish Weekly,* Jacksonville, March 20, 1942, 3.

[97] Waldeck, *Athene Palace Bucharest*, 34.

[98] Ibid, 34–6.

determined not to offend anyone else. On the night that Paris fell on June 14, 1940, the Germans who gathered in the lobby of the Athénée Palace did not meet the expectations of their audience. Many had anticipated a grand celebration, given the Romanians' strong pro-French sentiments. She believed "No victor could behave with more reticence and dignity." "The Hitler Germans" were becoming more lenient, but their efforts proved useless. Waldeck saw that their "impeccable behaviour" greatly annoyed the Rumanians, who" sneered" and said, "The German minister has told them to be extra-careful not to offend our pro-French feelings. They expect to win us over by politeness!"[99]

Regardless of Waldeck's intentions and principles[100], her evocative depictions of the diverse society gathered at the tables of the Athénée Palace Restaurant during the late 1940s when food and the act of dining had a subordinate significance and did not symbolize an "agent of connection." Instead of specific culinary nuances, political considerations focused on broader aspects like identity, social dynamics, and ideology. Restaurants serve as gathering places for diverse societies and cultures, resulting in "structured interactions," deviating from Simmel's preference for typical interactions in a "fluid, fleeting state but are no less agents of the connection of individuals to societal existence" as seen in ideal, non-conflictual scenarios. [101]

As Nazi Germany advanced throughout Europe, this heightened tensions in Bucharest's public places, such as restaurants, where customers' focus shifted from food to politics due to frightening news reports. A Pulitzer Prize-winning foreign reporter for the *New York Times* in the 1940s and 1950s, Cyrus Leo Sulzberger returned to "truncated Rumania"

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[99] Ibid.

[100] See Latham, Jr., "Postfață," in Waldeck, *Atheneé Palace*, trans. Ileana Sturdza (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2000), 334–5.

[101] Alejandro Colas, *Food, Politics, and Society. Social Theory and the Modern Food System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018), 55.

in the fall of 1940. Upon his arrival, he found that "Fascist momentum gained daily" and that "the new sovereign, young King Michael, had no time to rally his bewildered and corrupted nation." There were "two peculiarly nasty Fascist journalists" who "rushed up boasting that Berlin, Rome and Tokyo had just signed a Tripartite Pact" on September 27 while he ate at an outside eatery:

> What do you Americans think about that," one asked, as they sat down uninvited and helped themselves to wine. 'All I can say,' I replied, 'is that when the Allied victory parade is held it will include a Rumanian contingent. As usual you will change sides.[102]

Countess Waldeck presented the Germans as exhibiting "impeccable behavior," considering the feelings of the Romanian owner and patrons of the Athénée Palace to ensure their "pro-French feelings" were not offended. In Sulzberger's contrasting account, the pro-French hotel owner was threatened with "to hang the Nazi flag over the entrance or to hang there himself" should he refuse. Sulzberger indicated that Germany started Romania's military takeover on October 11. The American chargé d'affaires, both outraged and afraid, was "ousted from his apartment on one requisitioned floor."[103]

Sulzberger was again in the center of the tension that pervaded the Romanian restaurant venues, but this time through the eyes of Robert St. John. While "half a dozen" American reporters were savoring their supper and the ambiance at their beloved table at "Tchina's," the incident that turned out to be so comical occurred one night. It was the identical Romani orchestra. Once again, the meal was excellent. Each server was an old acquaintance. However, the eatery exuded an ominous air because, rather than the regular cheerful customers, "the diners that night were all Nazi

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[102] Cyrus Leo Sulzberger, *A Long Row of Candles. Memoirs, Diaries 1934–1954* (London: Macmillan, 1969), 109.

[103] Ibid.

officers" with such a "grim of countenance that the evening was "painful even before it began."[104] When the kind server finally remarked, "There, Felix, is your favourite dish!" the long-simmering tension erupted in a riot. He set the dish under the table for Sulzberger's canine companion, who accompanied him everywhere. A German party member yelled out to the head waiter, "We refuse to eat in a place which permits animals to use the same plates as humans!" Meanwhile, "the loud noise of a knife or fork being struck violently and repeatedly against a glass" resounded. "Half a dozen of the Germans jumped to their feet" in a spontaneous show of unity. In a loud voice, Sulzberger asked the headwaiter if this was "still a free country, or are the Germans running everything, including this restaurant" as he approached their table:

> It was an international incident. It was also a crisis for the management of Bucharest's leading restaurant. Everyone knew that it would probably be a long, long time before Rumanians would have much voice in running anything in their country. Without a single German gun being fired, Rumania had been taken over[105].

The same thing occurred when the Germans "appropriated" the dining room at the Athénée Palace for their "exclusive use," which was something Robert St. John lamented. Goldie Horowitz and Baroness Edith von Koehler were the only women "entertained at luncheon or dinner by high-ranking Nazi officers." St. John observed that Countess Rosie Waldeck and Goldie Horowitz's biographical notes were identical, suggesting that St. John may have been trying to tease them.[106] If the identity of Countess Waldeck was questionable, it was self-evident that the Baroness was an SS agent.[107]

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[104] St. John, *Foreign Correspondent*, 181–2.
[105] Ibid, 182.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Emanuel Bădescu, *În București prin Micul Paris* (Bucharest: Vremea, 2019), 10.

Political dynamics significantly influenced and transformed culinary preferences, shaping how people interact socially and the mutual respect they extend to one another. This shift in food choices and communal dining experiences altered social gatherings and contributed to deeper societal issues, ultimately fostering environments where discrimination, brutality, and inequity could thrive. As extremist political ideologies took root, they dictated what was consumed and included in the act of sharing meals, leading to divisions extending beyond the dinner table into the fabric of society itself.

Conclusion

This chapter has specifically examined the portrayal of Romanian culinary heritage and art in American correspondents' accounts during pre- and wartime in Europe from 1939 to 1941. Romania has been the focus of significant attention as preparations were made and a secure environment was established in anticipation of the impending conflict. The research highlighted the importance of food, including its raw ingredients, preparation, consumption, and communal enjoyment, inside the heterotopian environments of Bucharest's upscale eateries. Food preparation and consumption in public areas were seen as cultural negotiations between America and Romania. The significance of menus and appealing flavors in social interactions diminished with the advancement of war. Society exhibited significant heterogeneity, and the customers of the restaurants were culturally, politically, economically, and professionally divided. The prevailing condition resulted from the apprehension and stress linked to warfare.

The journals' focus on starvation in nations under German control and the global economic crisis led to a decline in interest in gastronomy. The research highlighted the role played by fashionable restaurants in

interwar Bucharest, which catered to a diverse clientele, including foreign officials, correspondents, Romanian aristocratic and bourgeois elites, politicians, diplomats, and officers seeking the most profitable political alliance. The research stressed the significance of Romanian-American identity, alongside political and cultural negotiations, within the backdrop of conflicting interrelations resulting from war.

7. News and Coffee Sharing. Intellectual Mobility and Global Communication

Coffee, Culture, and Politics

European cafés and bars played a crucial role as meeting places for American reporters during World War II. The reporters would convene in groups to cooperate and efficiently manage the news about the war's tempestuous progress, with a strong feeling of unity, support, and cooperation. Previous discussions related to Romania's history have given little attention to the importance of coffee as a cultural and social element of cohesion. Whereas the research may be deemed as based on the history of minor, marginal, accidental, and unremarkable aspects of society, it does bring attention to the fact that coffee tradition flourished throughout the enthusiastic *Belle Époque*, especially in Austria-Hungary, Germany, and France. Not even Bucharest and other main cities in Romania could resist this trend.

Facing the threat of war and dictatorial policies, cafés like Casa Capșa on Calea Victoriei, which were frequented by the Francophone artists and iconoclasts of the avant-garde movement in full swing at the turn of the 20th century, along with the academic and literary *crème de la crème*, who valued spirited discussions and staying current. The new symbolism of European cafés during the interwar years is the focus of this investigation, particularly the transformation from lively, accessible gathering spots to confined, dissonant interacting environments defined by a hierarchy of power. Academic and literary discussions and passionate political debates would be substituted with disputes, scenic acts, encrypted data transmission, and emotional or physical clashes. Coffee shops or

cafés emerged as catalysts of modernity, wherein both commercial and residential areas intersected in a heterotopic environment characterized by fluid boundaries:

> The meeting place of private persons and public personae, it is regarded as fed by all kinds of transactions for which specialized (sub)spaces, actors and media are required. Such are tea, coffee and chocolate houses in Classic Modernity also known as the Enlightenment.[1]

In sociology, cafés belong to the "third place." It denotes social situations distinct from the two primary social settings of home ("first place") and employment ("second place"). Such third places include cafés, bars, clubs, bars, and bistros. In his 1989 book *The Great Good Place*, Ray Oldenburg contends that in times of peace, third places are vital for promoting democracy, community engagement, and fostering a sense of place.[2]

Coffee is vital in establishing a pleasant, relaxed, and congenial sense of place. Coffee has been nourishing increased social interactions by aligning the concepts of "sociability" and "consumption" in specifically designated areas. However, it gradually lost its distinctive taste and became a disguise, a justification, and a mask for concealed thoughts and emotions. Following their extensive travels across Europe and arrival in Romania, American journalists diligently recorded these facts under the pressure of the war. During an era of warfare, the cafés, bars, and nightclubs in Bucharest that provided coffee were known by identical designations but maintained a distinct notoriety.

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[1] Mihaela Irimia, "Beyond Cultural Borders of Classic Modern British Culture: The Cultural Institutions of Tea, Coffee and Chocolate and the Literature," *Anuarul Institutului de Cercetări Socio–Umane "Gheorghe Șincai" al Academiei Române,* no. 14 (2011), 5–26.

[2] Ray Oldenburg, *The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Community Centers, Beauty Parlors, General Stores, Bars, Hangouts, and How They Get You Through the Day* (New York: Paragon House, 1989), 14.

Bruno Girveau likened cafés and coffee houses to restaurants, as establishments founded throughout the 19th century under the *Ancien régime*, which flourished as public venues for the emerging reformist bourgeoisie. Girveau contended that during the early 1800s, Paris had over two hundred restaurants and slightly more than a thousand cafés. One hundred years later, the capital city alone had a staggering three thousand cafés and over one thousand restaurants. The mere consideration of economic and demographic variables is insufficient to explain the flourishing of cafés and restaurants. From the earliest years of the long 19th century onward, these institutions became essential hubs for social interaction and commerce in metropolitan life. Patrons perused and discussed press articles. Academic, political, literary, and artistic groups congregated there.[3] Bob Biderman also noted the geographic differences between such establishments in character and intent. While the main objective of coffeehouses in Vienna and Budapest was to provide a wide range of coffee options, Parisian cafés primarily catered to alcohol use, with coffee being a predetermined companion. The period of "Parisian Bohemia," recognized as the "great age," promoted the use of brandy and absinthe as sources of caffeine. Coffee was essential for "the high-strung artists and writers" who saw certain cafés as their spiritual sanctuary.[4]

The significant American displacement to Paris following World War I encompassed writers, artists, and journalists. They arrived in large numbers, both inexperienced and seasoned, with aspirations to become writers of poetry, short-story writers, or writers of novels. Paris presented them with a considerable benefit, enhanced by an advantageous postwar currency exchange rate and the absence of Prohibition,

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3 Bruno Girveau, *La belle époque des cafés et des restaurants*, Guides Paris/Musée d'Orsay (Paris: Hachette, Réunion des musées nationaux, 1990), 2–3.

4 Bob Biderman, *A People's History of Coffee and Cafés* (Cambridge: Black Apollo Press, 2013), 159. See Tom Standage, *A History of the World in 6 Glasses* (New York: Walker & Company), 2006.

by offering employment opportunities that allowed them to reside abroad for prolonged durations.[5]

In his book, *News of Paris: American Journalists in the City of Light Between the Wars*, Ronald Weber encapsulates the vibrant, often chaotic realm of American journalists in Paris at the zenith of the expatriate era. It achieves this by focusing on the lives of notable individuals such as Ernest Hemingway, James Thurber, Henry Miller, Elliot Paul, William L. Shirer, Dorothy Thompson, Janet Flanner, and Eric Sevareid, as well as the prominent newspapers, including the *Paris Herald* (the European edition of the *New York Herald Tribune*) and the *Tribune*, a dynamic and innovative offshoot of the *Chicago Tribune*. Because of the war, American press operations relocated from London to Paris. The French capital became, as a newly arrived journalist described it, "the center of American journalism in Europe," with employment opportunities at English-language periodicals and news services, foreign offices of American newspapers, and various freelance positions catering to an audience in the United States eager for European news.[6]

Among the American foreign correspondents, Edmond Taylor was promoted from a simple staff member at the Paris *Tribune* to the head of the *Chicago Tribune's* Paris office.[7] He noted that each renowned café in Paris had its philosopher, with larger cafés sometimes hosting many competing philosophers, whose nightly discourses attracted groups of devoted followers during those "nightly symposia." Parisian cafés exerted a slight impact from classic European intellectual café culture on American expatriate society. *Tribune* journalists periodically organized a rhetorical contest at Gillotte's café, stimulating the thoughts of local philosophers.[8]

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[5] Ronald Weber, *News of Paris: American Journalists in the City of Light between the Wars* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2006), 1.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid, 135.

[8] Ibid, 116–117.

During the transition from the 19th to the 20th century, the Viennese café remained the premier destination for cultural activities for the youthful Stefan Zweig. The café was an unparalleled institution in Vienna and had no equivalent counterpart anywhere. It functioned as a "democratic club" that allowed anybody to participate in exchange for a "cheap cup of coffee." Patrons might spend extended periods there, peruse an inexhaustible array of newspapers and periodicals, engage in writing, card games, conversation, and check their mail. A more sophisticated Viennese café would have not just all the newspapers in Vienna but also those from the world's remotest parts. Through this approach, the young Zweig gained a comprehensive understanding of all recently released books and works, regardless of their geographical source. He obtained unrestricted access to an extensive knowledge of all ongoing global events.[9] He understood how cafés foster multicultural dialogue and cooperation:

> […] nothing contributed as much to the intellectual mobility and the international orientation of the Austrian as that he could keep abreast of all world events in the café, and at the same time discuss them in the circle of his friends.[10]

The increase in the reputation of 19th-century great cafés in Vienna, Paris, Berlin, Budapest, and other cities in Central Europe epitomized the transformations in urban life resulting from political, social, and economic unbalance triggered by a multicultural transition. Before the emergence of contemporary coffeehouses or cafés enhancing coffee taste with aesthetic and cultural standards, coffee was mainly imported from the East into Europe. These institutions improved the flavor of coffee by integrating creative and erudite principles. Without a shadow of hesitation, a significant societal reconstruction occurred when coffee was first brought to Europe. With the collapse of feudalism, the development of mercantilism,

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9 Ștefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday* (London, Toronto, and Melbourne: Cassell, 1953), 40–41.

10 Ibid.

and the first symptoms of the earliest capitalism, Europe was being ripped apart by the economic forces of a tremendous and profound shift, and they were helping to construct a fresh beginning on the remains of the past. Coffee, referred to as the Black Apollo, was there wherever you looked, causing the young to feel invigorated while the elderly fell into a feudal state of apathy.[11] Coffee's origins can be traced back to a period of significant changes in how people perceive time. The coffeehouse offered a unique view of life's rapid evolution, leading to the establishment of our modern world, which became a primary site for coffee consumption.

To look profoundly into the history of coffee and cafés, one must be willing to move beyond our natural tendency to view the past as a linear progression of events. Instead, one must be willing to piece together stories from various sources and aspects, combining the knowledge of botanical scholars, magicians, traders, landscapers, experts in economics, creators, businesspeople, and customers.[12] The history of coffee may be traced back to the beginning of its journey to plantations in North America in the 18th century. Despite this, Europeans who fled the revolutions in Europe in 1848 likely made substantial contributions to developing a crucial American café ambiance. Most metropolitan intellectuals of the middle class attended the coffeehouses where radical discourse was initially presented. Many of these people had been educated in Vienna, Berlin, Prague, or Budapest. Individuals could easily adjust to their new nation since cafés became integral to existence.[13] Countless centers of education and culture exist worldwide.

In *Théories des Cafés*, Gérard-Georges Lemaire highlighted the historical significance of literary cafés as cultural hubs for intellectual and artistic exchange:

[11] Biderman, *A People's History of Coffee and Cafés*, 14.
[12] Ibid, 13.
[13] Ibid, 142–3.

> High places of culture in the East as in the West, literary cafés have played a primordial role in the history of letters and the arts, theater and music, politics and journalism, publishing and the human and social sciences. "Schools of knowledge" or "academic offices," these cafés have served as a setting for assemblies or meetings from time immemorial.[14]

Cafés were symbols of modern urban life. As urban sociologist Ernest W. Burgess stated in 1935, residential areas, communities, neighborhoods, social and commercial zones, and transitional regions became interconnected within interwar cityscapes.[15] Two years later, American historian, sociologist, literary critic, and philosopher of technology Lewis Mumford mirrored this view. He believed the essence of urban life fundamentally mirrored that of rural life, as both depended on social interactions.[16] If urban independent communities were not on the periphery or close to the city, where urban life resembled rural life due to social links, they would have been rural villages.[17] Urbanization shifted employment from agriculture to non-agricultural sectors.[18] This evolution particularly impacted women transitioning from traditional domestic work to wage labor.[19] The interwar period saw a loss of social unity in the metropolis as culture shifted from rural to urban areas.[20] As Louis Wirth observed

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[14] Gérard–Georges Lemaire, *Théories des Cafés*, Vol. 1 (Paris: IMEC Editions, Éditions Éric Koehler, 1997).

[15] Ernest W. Burgess, "The Growth of the City: An Introduction to a Research Project," in *The City Reader*, eds. Richard T. LeGates and Frederic Stout, 5th edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), (156–63) 158–9.

[16] Lewis Mumford, "What Is a City? Architectural Record," in *The City Reader*, ed. T. LeGates and Stout, 5th edn, (91–95) 94.

[17] Andres Duany and Elisabeth Plater-Zyberk, "The Neighborhood, the District, and the Corridor," in *The City Reder*, eds. LeGates and Stout, 3rd edn, (207–11) 208–9.

[18] Kingsley Davis, "The Urbanization of the Human Population," in *The City Reader*, eds. LeGates and Stout, 5th edn, (25–34) 28.

[19] Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," in *The City Reader*, eds. LeGates and Stout, 5th ed. (97–104), 103.

[20] Sharon Zukin, "Whose Culture? Whose City?," in *The City Reader*, eds. LeGates and Stout, 5th ed. (136–46) 137.

in the late 1930s, changing interests and employment opportunities, especially for women, led to a population loss and rendered traditional ideals and social structures meaningless in modern urban settings.[21]

Modern cities have been conceived as interlinked rhizomes, which are interconnected rhizomes themselves.[22] However, Romanian cities were hesitant to expand into rural areas, unlike their contemporary Western counterparts. Still, in 1898, Corneliu Diaconovich, the author of the *Enciclopedia Română*, stated that Bucharest was not built for a specific purpose like American cities or by a single individual like St. Petersburg. He believed that, despite its vague and inconclusive foundation legends, Bucharest was proven to belong to the Giurgiu-Brașov commercial network. Diaconovich emphasized that regardless of the true origin of the city, it was architecturally centered around monasteries and churches along the Dâmbovița River.[23] Lipscani, a guild-specific shopping street adjacent to the later-built major thoroughfare, Calea Victoriei, would become the central commercial district in interwar Bucharest. From preservationists' continued efforts to maintain architectural and social specificity to fully embracing its Little Paris nickname, Bucharest's perpetual transformation has shaped its architecture and allure. Interwar Bucharest and contemporary Bucharest differ in politeness, demographics, brands, colors, flavors, sounds, and tempos. The city's daytime was tumultuous and loud, while its nighttime was mysterious and alluring.[24] Bucharest's aspiration to become a "second Paris" was mirrored in the array of cafés that dotted the Romanian capital city at the dawn of the 19th century. The renowned cafés and restaurants in Bucharest were the merging

[21] Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," 103.

[22] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London and New York: Continuum, 2007), 23.

[23] Corneliu Diaconovich, *Enciclopedia Română. Tomul I: A – Copenhaga*, vol. 1 (Sibiu: W. Kraft, 1898), 618–19.

[24] See Ioana Pârvulescu, *Întoarcere în Bucureștiul interbelic* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2007), 5–7.

point between elite "Romanian-cum-foreign cuisine" and the middle-class fascination with "Romanian-cum-foreign newspapers, novels, and avant-garde art." Capșa, located on Calea Victoriei, served as a luxurious and well-appointed public salon where distinguished guests enjoyed exquisite cakes and ice-creams while elite authors and critics engaged in intellectual discussions.[25]

In Tom Sandqvist's[26] interpretation of Dada's Eastern roots, Capșa was the café popular among Romanian avant-gardists where the privileged class openly presented themselves and engaged in daily, hourly, and round-the-clock discussions and resolutions of significant national issues.[27] To depict Romanian bohemia in the early 20th century, Tom Sandqvist draws upon the narrative of American journalist John Reed's voyage to Bucharest for the American *Metropolitan Magazine*, published in 1915 and later rewritten in the book *The War in Eastern Europe*. *Described by John Reed. Pictured by Boardman Robinson*, released the following year.[28] In 1917, *The Metropolitan Magazine* demoted Reed for publishing pieces criticizing the United States' engagement in the war. Yet, after hiring him, *The Masses* and the *New York Mail* advised him to reconsider his pacifist position. To address these concerns, he and his wife, the feminist author Louise Bryant,

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[25] Lesley Chamberlain, *The Food and Cooking of Eastern Europe* (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1989), 36.

[26] Tom Sandqvist is Professor and Docent of Art History and Science of Art at the University College of Arts, Crafts, and Design in Stockholm, Sweden, and the University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland.

[27] Tom Sandqvist, *Dada East: The Romanians of Cabaret Voltaire* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), 23–24.

[28] John Silas Reed was an American Harvard College graduate, journalist, poet, and socialist activist who gained recognition for his book, *Ten Days that Shook the World* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1919), which provides a comprehensive account of the Bolshevik Revolution. See Carmen Andraș, "Crossing the Borders of Cultures: The First Wave of American War Correspondents in Romania and the Transylvanian Case (1916–early 1930s)," in *Crossing Borders: Insights into the Cultural and Intellectual History of Transylvania (1848–1948)*, eds. Carmen Andraș, Cornel Sigmirean (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut – Gatineau: Symphologic Publishing, 2016), 199–232.

traveled to Petrograd in August 1917. Reed emerged as a dedicated adherent to Bolshevism upon immersion in socialist circles. Following the publication of *Ten Days that Shook the World*, his memoirs of the October Revolution, he gained widespread recognition. Reed died as a Russian resident in 1920 and was buried in the Kremlin Wall Necropolis.

The book *The War in Eastern Europe* reflected his travels around Europe, featuring Romania in the slightly critical chapter titled "The Burning Balkans." In Bucharest, the Athénée Palace hotel served as his main base for his investigations on Calea Victoriei, primarily due to its commercial amenities, including the prominent presence of exotic coffee houses and eateries. He explored the multitude of cafés and pastry shops that extend tables into the pavement and streets, teeming with "debauched-looking men and women got up like chorus-girls." Within the open café-gardens, the Romani musicians choreograph frenzied rhythms that became ingrained like a habitual use of strong drinks. A hundred eateries were teeming with "exotic crowds."[29]

Thomas Sandqvist considered it "the most literary and at the same time the most politically critical description of Romania."[30] Undoubtedly, it served as a political and critical depiction of the public and cultural milieu of Bucharest. While staying in an opulent hotel, the socialist sensibilities inside him were averse to the bourgeois way of life in the Romanian metropolis.

A significant increase in American war journalists in Europe would happen in the following decades. The reporters received education to record events and depict individuals objectively, unbiasedly, and open-mindedly. Consequently, engaging and collaborating at coffee tables would acquire distinct societal, cultural, and occupational significance and

[29] John Reed, *The War in Eastern Europe. Described by John Reed.* Pictured by Boardman Robinson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), 297.
[30] Sandqvist, *Dada East*, 112–13.

implications. Hence, William Shirer, an American reporter and author renowned for his influential book *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany*, published in 1960, could still enjoy the lively ambiance of Parisian cafés in the 1920s. During the 1920s and 1930s, Shirer served as a foreign correspondent for the *Chicago Tribune* and *Universal News Service*, stationed in Europe and India. He usually spent his evenings on café terraces located in Montparnasse, St. Germain-des-Pres, the Boulevard St. Michel, the Champs Elysees, the Grand Boulevards, or at the two upscale brasseries on the Left Bank: the Balzar on Rue des Écoles or Lipp's on Boulevard St. Germain. It was a" magic life," with each day and night abundantly filled, "opening up new worlds, ancient and current, to two awe-struck Midwest youths." [31]

Shirer's account indicates that there were just a handful of "American bars" in Paris since the city had not yet undergone "Americanization." Instead of indulging in "cocktails or hard liquor to start the evening off," American correspondents convened for an aperitif on a café patio. Some of their preferred locations included the Deux Magots, situated across from the picturesque old Church of St. Germain-des-Près, with its robust "eleventh-century Romanesque tower," the Dome in Montparnasse, frequented by numerous "Left Bank American writers," and the Café de la Paix, nestled on Grand Boulevard near the Opéra, where locals socialized with visitors from a dozen different countries, most of whom were Americans.[32]

Another American correspondent, Paul Scott Mowrer, also frequented Parisian cafés during the same period. Mowrer was a multifaceted musician, novelist, newspaper editor, foreign reporter, and recipient of the Pulitzer Prize. Beginning in 1910, Mowrer held the position of Paris correspondent

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[31] William Lawrence Shirer, *20th Century Journey: a Memoir of a Life and the Times*, vol. 1 (Boston: Little, Brown, 1976), 58.

[32] Ibid, 251.

for the *Chicago Daily News*. From 1935 to 1944, he supervised the international news division and was the newspaper editor. He appreciated the many stores, flower markets, street sights, the "uninhibited Parisians," and the "friendly cafés." His perception was that nowhere in Paris should one have a sense of being lost. Near him, there was always a café where people could comfortably relax either inside or outdoors and, for the cost of a beer or a coffee, observe familiar faces, engage in reading or writing for an unlimited duration, experiencing a sense of hospitality and uninterrupted tranquility.[33]

Mowrer particularly appreciated the vibrant atmosphere of early 1920s Bucharest, which he described as a prosperous metropolis with luxurious stone residences, glittering palaces, banks, hotels, and personal beautification stores. At five o'clock, the cafés were congested. The whole of Bucharest was positioned on the Calea Victoriei, where people strolled, conversed, enjoyed ice cream, observed the stores, and witnessed "painted beauties" gliding "in two-horse, open carriages," propelled by elegant taxi drivers adorned in their customary long "blue or green velvet" dresses.[34]

Two years before she arrived in Bucharest in 1937, Virginia Cowles experienced similar excitement at the cafés along the Gran Via in Madrid amidst the ongoing shelling of the Spanish Civil War. Despite a notable shortage of essential alcoholic substances, cognac and gin attracted consumers to the cafés all through afternoon hours. One of her favorite haunts was a highly esteemed café on the Puerta del Sol. An explosive device had penetrated the uppermost stratum of the building, exposing sky pieces that were discernible through the openings in the roof. The ground floor was filled with a substantial crowd. However, she concluded that the "two gayest meeting places" were the "once fashionable" Chicote's

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33 Paul Scott Mowrer, *The House of Europe* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1945), 553.

34 Idem, *Balkanized Europe. A Study of Analysis and Reconstruction* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1921), 17–18.

and Molinero's on the Gran Via, one of Madrid's most extensively bombed thoroughfares.

Limitless numbers of "soldiers" and "platinum girls" occupied the cafés. At Molinero's, she saw a last enduring symbol of Spain's "class-conscious society." Madrid, overall, seemed to be a "strange carnival." Like most company and hotel owners, the management of these cafés was either assassinated or managed to flee from the city. Trade Unions acquired control of their administration. Both grand structures served as the main administrative centers for governmental institutions. These luxurious establishments functioned as the sites where reporters interviewed those "comrades" or officials dressed in "sweaters and leather jackets" while showing pride in their elevated positions.[35]

Arriving from these regions devastated by war, where daily life continued, American reporters made their way to Bucharest, at the intersection of military and geopolitical pathways. Furthermore, it functioned as the last transient sanctuary along the trajectory of the continuing warfare.

The World of Yesterday and of Today

American foreign correspondents encountered and compared the "world of yesterday and of today." Devoid of them, life would be replete with ambiguities and look bereft of meaning.[36] Their efforts went beyond the mere task of drawing audience interest in a diverse array of shared occurrences. The correspondents' main objective was to closely monitor and provide valuable insights into the activities occurring in the background. A comprehensive investigation was undertaken by the reporters, who investigated the causative elements behind the occurrences and the underlying objectives of the persons and organizations concerned. They

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[35] Virginia Cowles, *Looking for Trouble* (London: Faber & Faber, 2022), 18–19.

[36] Curt Riess, *They Were There: The Story of World War II and How It Came About* (Garden City: Garden City Publishing, 1945), XV.

grasped the causal reasoning behind a seemingly unrelated and irrational series of events and their shared foundational principle. The public was made aware of the expected events and the explanation for their inevitability. In advance of the imminent calamity that the world was swiftly nearing, they had beforehand foreseen it.[37]

In contrast to the conventional depiction of the "Lost Generation," which saw F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway "drinking their anomie away at a Parisian café," 20th-century American foreign correspondents actively engaged with, rather than consciously avoided, the world. They simultaneously used "more subjective" and "more intimate" modes of journalism to convey the global issues of their day.[38] They often visited various venues throughout their journeys to and from battle zones on many continents, including cafés, pubs, clubs, cabarets, luxury salons, restaurants, and hotel concourses. These open areas functioned as official meeting places, monitoring stations, and locations for socializing with friends and colleagues over coffee or wine, often ignoring the ominous atmosphere that kept them watching. Jessica Pearce Rotondi asserts that cafés have served as a dedicated space for "serious" deliberations on innovative concepts from the time of the Ottoman Empire until the American and French Revolutions. Foreigners Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and T.S. Eliot congregated at La Rotonde. Poet and critic Apollinaire, positioned next to André Breton at the Café de Flore, engaged in the creation of his art critique, *Les Soirées de Paris*. By the mid-20th century, Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre created philosophical ideas from their shared table.[39]

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Deborah Cohen, *Last Call at the Hotel Imperial: the Reporters Who Took on a World at War* (New York: Random House 2022), XXII.

[39] Jessica Pearce Rotondi, *How Coffee Fueled Revolutions – and Revolutionary Ideas*, HISTORY, February 11, 2020, https://www.history.com/news/coffee–houses–revolutions, accessed June 15, 2024.

In France, a military order prohibited cafés and other commercial establishments from tuning in to enemy transmissions, while in Germany, it was explicitly prohibited even inside one's own house, with the extreme penalty of death in some cases. Starting from renowned European cafés, several American reporters reached Bucharest. Paul Scott Mowrer, William L. Shirer from Café de la Paix on the Place de l'Opéra or the Deux Magots, the Café de Flore, La Rotonde and café terraces in Montparnasse, St. Germain-des-Pres, the Boulevard St. Michel, the Champs Elysees, the Grand Boulevards for coffee and croissants in Paris; John Gunther, Dorothy Thompson, H. R. Knickerbocker, James Vincent Sheean, Robert Best, William Shirer from Café Louvre, Café Imperial, Café Central in Vienna; John Gunther, William Shirer, Dorothy Thompson from Café des Westens and the bars at the Adlon and Savoy hotels in Berlin; Robert St. John, Robert Parker from Café New York on Erzsébet Boulevard and (the misspelled) Café Angly or Hangly Café, most likely Angol (English) café in Budapest; Shirer from the Café Florian on the Piazza San Marco in Venice; or Virginia Cowles from the cafés on the Gran Via in Madrid, the European war prompted them to head to the bar of the Athénée Palace hotel in Bucharest.

Olivia Manning referred to it as the "English Bar" in her *Balkan Trilogy*. The renowned English Bar served as a secluded gathering spot for the English until their evacuation in 1939:

> The bar – the famous English Bar — had been, until a month before, the preserve of the British and their associates. The enemy had been kept out. Then, on the day Calais fell, a vast crowd of German businessmen, journalists and legation officials had entered in a body and taken possession.[40]

The American journalists described it as the bar of the Athénée Palace, as they disapproved of any expression of nationalist and elite exclusivity on the premises. Among the visitors who frequented it at the end of the 1930s through the early 1940s, there were several established

[40] Olivia Manning, *The Spoilt City* (London, Melbourne, and Toronto: Heinemann, 1962), 9.

patrons: John Gunther, Leland Stowe, Paul Scott Mowrer of the *Chicago Daily News*; C[yrus] L[eo] Sulzberger, Ray Brock and Walter Duranty of the *New York Times*; Robert St. John, Robert Parker of the *Associated Press*; Edward W. Beattie, Ann Stringer, Henry T. Gorrell of the *United Press*; Sam Brewer of the *Chicago Tribune*; William L. Shirer of the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Universal News Service*; Dorothy Celene Thompson of the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*; H. R. Knickerbocker of the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* and the *International News Service*; Sonia Tomara of the *New York Herald Tribune*; Betty Wason of CBS; Rose Waldeck of the *Newsweek*; Lee Miller of *Vogue*; Frank Stevens of the *Christian Science Monitor*; James Vincent (Jimmy) Sheean, international correspondent. Considering the historical and theoretical reflections mentioned above, it is crucial to assess the level of recognition they received in Romania and the prevailing perceptions surrounding them.

Allies or Enemies?

American correspondents participated in Bucharest's social events dedicated to foreign journalists, and they garnered particular interest in the Romanian interwar press. The most relevant publications from a selection of over 60 periodicals published in Romania throughout the 1920s and 1930s, which included significant articles regarding American correspondents and press agencies, are: *Adevărul Literar și Artistic, Curentul, Cuvântul, Dimineața, Dreptatea, Le Moment, Lumea, Lupta, Neamul Românesc, Rampa, Realitatea Ilustrată, Timpul, Țara Noastră, Universul, Vremea*. Following the switch of allegiance from the Axis powers to the Allies on 23 August 1944, the Romanian pro-Soviet government, under the leadership of Petru Groza, had a superficially positive attitude towards Anglo-American journalists from 1945 until 1952. However, American correspondents performed a double act, maintaining an equal distance from the communist

regime in the USSR and its affiliated countries. Nonetheless, their articles published in the US were critical, shedding light on numerous betrayals of democracy under Soviet rule.

Romanian interwar publications extensively covered the interviews conducted by foreign journalists with King Carol II, his statements to the foreign press, and his frequent informative meetings with the international press at the Undersecretary of State for the Press and Propaganda (Subsecretariatul de Stat al Propagandei).[41] In the June 1930 issue, in almost half of page 4, discussed the King's views on diverse topics, including his policy towards minorities, particularly the Jews, and the infusion of foreign capital in Romania. The King expressed his desire for the foreign press to be accurately informed and his optimism for discovering the most favorable solutions for Romania. Among the international journalists, the United States was represented by Hugo Arthur Neumann from the *Associated Press*, Leland Stowe from the *New York Herald Tribune*, John Gunther from the *Chicago Daily News*, W. Burnett from the *New York Sun*, William S. Shirer from the *Chicago Tribune*, F.T. Scheu from the *Daily Herald*. Isaac Horowitz, a Romanian Jewish reporter who moved to the United States, was also in attendance. He represented *The Day* (New York) and *The Jewish Daily Forward*.

Besides other American correspondents who visited Romania, there were journalists affiliated with the Anglo-American Press Association of Vienna, whose primary base of operations was Café Louvre. The organization's president was Robert Best, while the vice president was Hugo Arthur Neumann. In his book devoted to his friends in the Anglo-American Press Association, F.T. Scheu noted that the Association had

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[41] A similar position to the Undersecretary of State for Press and Propaganda, established in Italy in 1934. It operated in Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Salazarist Portugal. In October 1939, its responsibilities were transferred to Romania's Ministry of National Propaganda.

been accused of an unfavorable stance towards the Austrian leadership. He was an early member of the Association, joining when it was established in 1930, and maintained strong connections with the Austrian Social Democrats.[42] H. M. King Carol also accepted an interview with Alvin Steinkopf,[43] the Europe manager of the *Associated Press*. It was published in *Universul* in 1938. The statement provided by the Sovereign to the American agency portrayed a cheerful and hopeful view of the Jewish problem, fascism, and the international situation, dismissing any significant issues.[44] Another instance of the focus directed towards foreign journalists in Romania, including American correspondents, was the event titled "The informative audience of representatives of the foreign press at the State Undersecretary of Propaganda," as reported in the *România* newspaper in 1939.[45]

State Subsecretary Eugen Titeanu engaged in a two-hour dialogue with the foreign press delegates. Aside from an extensive roster of

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[42] Friedrich Scheu, *Der Weg Ins Ungewisse. Österreichs Schicksalskurve 1929–1938* (Vienna: Verlag Fritz Molden, 1972), 230–1. The book (translated into English as *The Way into the Uncertain: The Arc of Austria's Fate*) was dedicated to the author's colleagues from the Anglo-American Press Association of Vienna. "The authorities of the Schuschnigg dictatorship certainly had some reason to distrust the Western foreign press, given the political stance of most of the correspondents. This is expressed in the police files in a memo dated 25 May 1935, which states: 'The Federal Chancellery (Mr. Ministerial Counsellor Dr. Sewczik) has informed us by telephone that the Federal Chancellor has sent the B.K.A. an instruction regarding the 'Anglo-American Press Association of Vienna' (VIII–4355). The association is said to be strongly left–wing and to have an unpleasant position against the government.'"

[43] Steinkopf was sent by the *Associated Press* to cover events in Vienna, Budapest, and Central and Eastern Europe in 1934. Steinkopf headed the AP bureau in Budapest between 1938 and 1939. The *Associated Press* assigned him to its Berlin bureau later in 1939. In this role, Steinkopf reported on German operations in Russia and Poland. Following the United States' entry into the war in December 1941, Steinkopf was detained at Bad Nauheim, Germany, along with several American diplomats and members of the press corps, until their repatriation in May 1942.

[44] *Universul*, Bucharest, February 3, 1938, 1.

[45] "La Ministerul Propagandei," *România*, October 1, 1939, 5.

international guests, no specific information regarding the topics presented during this event is available. Among them, the press release mentioned the following American correspondents: O. Jahn of the *United Press* (UP), Alex Coler, the Romanian correspondent of the *Associated Press*, Liviu Artemie, the Romanian correspondent of the *International News Service*, F.E. Stevens of *The Christian Science Monitor,* J. Griffin of the *Chicago Daily News*, C. L. Sulzberger, special correspondent of the *New York Times*, Eugen Kovács, the correspondent at Bucharest for the *New York Times* for 14 years, Sonia Tomara of the *New York Herald Tribune,* Richard Mowrer of the *Chicago Daily News,* L. Lehrbas of the *Associated Press,* James Edward Brown from the *International News Service,* Edward Beattie of the *United Press,* and Clara Holingworth of the British *Daily Telegraph.* Most names are already known for their involvement in Romania and are also pertinent to the current subject of the study. According to the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, Liviu Artemie, Eugen Kovács, and Alex Coler, who had a strong professional association with Robert St. John and Robert Parker, faced significant challenges in trying to avoid antisemitic propaganda and crimes in Romania:

> The Rumanian Government has ordered all Rumanian Jews employed by foreign newspapers and news agencies to cease working for these organizations immediately, the *New York Times* reported in a Bucharest dispatch. Among the correspondents affected were Eugen Kovács, Alex Coler and Liviu Artemie.[46]

A German historian's documentation revealed that the *Associated Press* news agency established a formal alliance with the Hitler dictatorship during the 1930s. This relationship involved the dissemination of content to American periodicals that were directly produced and chosen by the

[46] *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* VII, no. 151, October 6, 1940, 4. The same issue included an information dated October 4, 1940, from Zurich, showing that "Rumania has banned leasing of dispensaries and chemist shops to Jews and employment of Jews in such places owned by 'Aryans,' the German wireless reported from Bucharest today."

Nazi Propaganda Ministry.[47] The *Associated Press*, along with other comparable press agencies, first declined to comply with the Nazis' demand to dismiss their Jewish employees. Journalist Louis P. Lochner of the *Associated Press* effectively denied the Propaganda Ministry's request. As the authoritarian regime gained momentum, the intensity of the pressure escalated. Lochner transferred his Jewish staff from the office in Nazi Germany to guarantee their well-being.[48] The *Associated Press* saw fewer concessions while stationed in totalitarian nations aligned with Germany but not under German control. In Romania, the Jewish editor of *Journalul* (sic!), Alex Coler, provided the *Associated Press* journalist Robert St. John with accurate daily information regarding the situation of the Jewish community. Code names were adopted as a strategy to bypass the Romanian censor.[49] St. John elucidated the method by which correspondents encoded their messages to evade the scrutiny of censorship:

> When it became obvious to the government monitors that we were talking code and after we had been warned to stop it, Parker and I worked out a new system. Instead of trying to give him the news in short laconic code sentences, I would get on the phone with what might be a story of considerable importance and begin by gossiping about the weather or other trivia. This was a signal to Parker that I had important news. After five or ten minutes of trying to put the monitor off his guard, I would then start talking American slang and nonsense in the hope that the monitor had learned his English in England.[50]

Nevertheless, censorship would attain its zenith of authority in 1941, upon Romania's accession to the Axis forces under the military dictatorship

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[47] Harriet Scharnberg, "Das A und P der Propaganda. Associated Press und die nationalsozialistische Bildpublizistik/ The A and P of Propaganda. Associated Press and Nazi Photojournalism," *Zeithistorische Forschungen / Studies in Contemporary History* 13 (2016), https://zeithistorische–forschungen.de/1–2016/5324, accessed July 14, 2024.

[48] Colin Shindler, "The Nazis' secret collaborators," *The Jewish Chronicle*, April 7, 2016, https://www.thejc.com/life–and–culture/books/the–nazis–secret–collaborators–wtr9mttm, accessed August 1, 2024.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Robert St. John, *Foreign Correspondent* (New York: Doubleday & Co, 1957), 112.

of Antonescu. The *Association of Foreign Press*, known as such, would transform into a monochromatic portrayal of journalists aligned with the Axis powers.[51] Journalists from the Allies had already left Romania. Therefore, it was unsurprising that they were not present at international news conferences or their headquarters in the Athénée Palace Hotel, especially in the days after Romania's participation in the German-led Operation Barbarossa against the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941.[52] Accordingly, the French language journal *Je Sais Tout De Bucarest* announced on 19 August 1941 that on the occasion of the departure of its first president, Dr. Klaus Schickert, the Association of Foreign Press hosted a splendid reception in its magnificent hall on Popa Russu Street. The photographs captured the essence of the individuals who attended the celebration: Georg Streiter, the new president; M. Solacolo, director of the Romanian Rador Press Agency; Giovanni Costa, Press Officer and correspondent of Corriere della Sera in Budapest;[53] Manole Stroici, musician and sportsman, appointed by Antonescu as Minister of Sports, leader of the ephemeral "Romanian Legionary Sport;"[54] Al. Tzigara Samurcas, a Romanian art historian, ethnographer, museologist and cultural journalist, Romanian Police leader, pioneer radio broadcaster, and controversial character recognized for his Germanophilia;[55] Serge (Sergiu) Lecca, activist of the "Crusade of Romanianism," a dissident faction of the Iron Guard,

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[51] *Je Sais Tout De Bucarest*, no. 32–33, August 19, 1941, 25.

[52] See Grant T. Harward, *Romania's Holy War. Soldiers, Motivation, and the Holocaust* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2021).

[53] Annalisa Capristo, "La Presse Italienne et La Persécution Des Juifs d'Europe de l'Est en 1941," trans. Fanny Levin Gallina, *Revue d'Histoire de La Shoah* I, N° 204, (January 9, 2016): 175–99, DOI 10.3917/rhsho.204.0175.

[54] Bogdan Popa, *Educație fizică, sport și societate în România interbelică* (Cluj–Napoca: Eikon, 2013), 197–8.

[55] Lucian Boia, *"Germanofilii." Elita intelectuală românească în anii Primului Război Mondial* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2010), 108.

Romania's main fascist movement;[56] Triandafilo, vice-president and Mussolini's Chargé d'affaires in Bucharest during the Republic of Salò.[57]

Dr. Klaus Schickert was director of the Institute for Research on the Jewish Question (Institut für Erforschung der Judenfrage, IEJ) between 1943 and 1944, editor and frequent contributor to the IEJ periodical *Der Weltkampf*, and author of the doctoral dissertation *Die Judenfrage in Ungarn*, which examined the *Jewish Question in Hungary* in detail, published under Goebbels's Ministry of Propaganda.[58] His successor at the Association of Foreign Press in Bucharest, Georg Streiter, was a journalist at *Berliner Börsenzeitung*.[59] On 10 December 1941, at a reception held by the Foreign Press Association, Romanian Deputy Prime Minister Mihai Antonescu bestowed upon Streiter the Order of the Crown of Romania in the rank of commander. German generals Wilhelm Speidel and Arthur Hauffe were also present, as was German Ambassador Manfred von Killinger.[60]

There is also the question of identifying those referred to as the "descendus à Athénée Palace" in 1941. Substantial advertising showcased an extensive list of regular hotel guests within the same *Je Sais Tout De Bucarest* edition. Only two Americans were identified explicitly among

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[56] Dennis Deletant, *Hitler's Forgotten Ally: Ion Antonescu and His Regime, Romania, 1940–1944* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Deletant, *Romania, 1916–1941. A Political History Routledge Histories of Central and Eastern Europe* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2023); Dan Amedeo Lăzărescu, Andrei Goldner, "Opțiuni în politica externă," in *Tragedia României: 1939–1947*. Institutul Național pentru Memoria Exilului Românesc: Restituiri I, ed. Ion Solacolu (Bucharest: Pro Historia, 2004), 67–76.

[57] Camil Demetrescu, *Note – Relatări* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2001), 264.

[58] CF Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, *Reconstructing the Record of Nazi Cultural Plunder. A Guide to the Dispersed Archives of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (err) and the Postwar Retrieval of ERR Loot*, Chapter 10: United States of America (March 2015), 183.

[59] Horst Junginger, *The Scientification of the "Jewish Question" in Nazi Germany* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 197–267. DOI https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004341883

[60] Klaus Popa, *Bio–bibliografisches Handbuch deutscher "Volksgruppen" Südosteuropa, Buchstabe S*, (May 31, 2015): 170–3, https://www.academia.edu/32064373/Bio_bibliografisches_Handbuch_deutscher_Volksgruppen_S%C3%BCdosteuropa_S, accessed July, 12 2024.

the many German, Italian, and Romanian visitors. Given the lack of a precise region of origin, they likely originated from a South American country where Romania had a more significant political influence.

Despite significant censorship affecting their journalistic efforts, American journalists continued to meet at cafés in Bucharest during the late 1930s. Official sources indicate that the Romanian Government strictly tracked them, mainly when the so-called inciting, provoking, misleading material was disseminated in gloomy locations such as cafés, where upheavals and disobedience were fostered. According to a censorship report on 7 December 1937, several cafés disseminated information on assaults and killings targeting Romanian journalists or foreigners and a potential assassin was apprehended. These items were ineligible for publication in any manner.[61] Literary historian Ioan Lăcustă asserted that despite the resistance from educated people, proposals had already been put up to abolish the cafés, but there was no assurance that the rumors would diminish. Close to the Royal Palace, cafés were regarded as central locations for disseminating and propagating rumors.[62]

Nevertheless, Romanian censors attributed the responsibility to the hostile local informants by pretending they intentionally guided foreign reporters and authorities to unreliable locations to manipulate their portrayals and conclusions about Romania. Ioan Lăcustă's book, *Cenzura veghează* (*Censorship watches*), features a 1939 report on the censorship of the novel *Drums in the Balkan Night* by American author John J. B. McCulloch. The report mainly focused on the sixth section of the book, which pertains to Romania and spans pages 219 to 273. A censured article authored by Nicolae Iorga in *Neamul Românesc* claimed that the writer depicted the citizenry of Bucharest as primarily made up of gypsies. The article ascribed the accountability to the informant and guide known as

[61] Ioan Lăcustă, *Cenzura veghează. 1937–1939* (Bucharest: Curtea Veche, 2007), 96.
[62] Ibid, 36.

"Dany Hurmuzescu" for directing the American author to a specific location in Bucharest called "Stone Cross" ("Crucea de Piatră"), renowned for its prostitution services.[63]

Previous interpretations of McCulloch's book, influenced by so-called detestable informants and infamous places, have established a self-victimization model resulting from an unjust representation of Romania in Anglo-American literature and the press. This model includes attributing responsibility to foreign journalists for their critical stance towards Romania. In a 1937 article entitled "Detractorii României" ("Romania's Detractors") issued in the *Universul* newspaper,[64] George Șeinescu, a British novelist of Romanian heritage, expressed his contempt regarding the depiction of Romania by its "Opponents." He criticized the chapter devoted to Romania by John Gunther in his *Inside Europe* book. Șeinescu maintained that the chapter was replete with "insinuations and insults," contending that the book could not have been composed without information supplied by a specific group of Romanians who specialized in frequenting the recently emerged underworld bars in Bucharest, where foreigners were introduced to the purported nightlife of the city, and where, following age-old local practices, "gossip is done at everyone's expense, and all kind of fake news are sold." Like Nicolae Iorga's article, McCulloch's book faced similar criticism, providing another disheartening example. Romania's fabricated representations were attributed to spies among the "international communists" or young frequent bar visitors from Bucharest. Thirdly, British writer Frederick Elwyn Jones authored the *book Hitler's Drive to the East*, produced by a group referred to as "extreme left oficina," portraying Romania based on the ideologies of Ana Pauker.[65]

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[63] John J. B. McCulloch, *Drums in the Balkan Night* (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1936), 228–9. Apud Lăcustă, *Cenzura veghează,* 175–6, 361.

[64] George Șeinescu, "Detractorii României," *Universul*, February 23, 1937, 3.

[65] Ibid.

A prominent feature of *Universul* was its overtly antisemitic and xenophobic position. The article in question was shown on a page next to a roster of the Jewish staff members of the *Adevărul* and *Dimineața* periodicals, who were similarly labeled as adversaries of Romania. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, several American war correspondents such as Walter Duranty, John Gunther, John Reed, Paul Scott Mowrer, Leland Stowe, Robert St. John, Cyrus Leo Sulzberger, and Lee White were widely recognized and portrayed as allies rather than opponents due to their reports on Romania. John Gunther was an extremely controversial author, acclaimed in Romania for his dialogues with European historical figures and his sharp examination of tyranny during wartime, but coupled with censure for his depiction of totalitarianism in Romania. Nonetheless, he and the subversive ambiance of the cafés he occasionally visited were deemed equally culpable.

The French administration's censoring strategies ascribed the stimulation of popular sentiment against them to the cafés in Paris. During wartime, a decree issued in France prohibited listening to broadcasts from adversary nations in cafés and other public places. In Germany, doing so within the country was explicitly forbidden, and under certain circumstances, it could carry the death penalty. With the explicit aim of combating clandestine misinformation operations, the French government sent teams of expert propaganda inspectors to each area to combat this purportedly harmful kind of propaganda. In public spaces, including the cafés, "propaganda detectives" were tasked with identifying and apprehending the persons responsible for spreading discouraging rumors to promote only optimistic covert operations.[66]

While the prestigious Parisian cafés became tools of government suppression, the fate of the renowned Viennese cafés must be further examined.

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[66] Edmond Taylor, *The Strategy of Terror. Europe's Inner Front* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1940), 195, 206.

Secret Negotiations at the Café Louvre in Vienna

From 1923 onwards, when Robert Best, an American journalist for the *United Press International* (UPI), designated the café as his informal office, Café Louvre solidified its status as an incubator for creativity and unrestrained interchange of ideas.[67] In due course, Robert Best emerged as the central figure for the international journalists stationed in Vienna.[68] Presumably, Best attracted additional acquaintances and colleagues from the news profession to his Stammtisch gathering.[69] Gradually, between the two World Wars, international reporters started frequenting Café Louvre as their leading venue for discussing news.[70] Over coffee and news, Robert Best, founder of the Anglo-American Press Association[71] in Vienna, would often meet with John Gunther and his wife, Frances (Fineman) Gunther, journalist for the *London News Chronicle*; Dorothy Thompson and her husband, writer Sinclair Lewis; H. R. Knickerbocker, James Vincent (Jimmy) Sheean, William L. Shirer, Marcel William Fodor[72] and his wife, Marie

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[67] Dan Durning, "Vienna's Café Louvre in the 1920s & 1930s: Meeting Place for Foreign Correspondents," Academia.Edu, February 2012, https://www.academia.edu/1370493/Viennas_Cafe_Louvre_in_the_1920s_and_1930s_Meeting_Place_of_Foreign_Correspondents , accessed August 10, 2024.

[68] Ibid.

[69] A Stammtisch, derived from German as "regular'' table," refers to both the unofficial meeting that occurs regularly and the prominent, often circular table that functions as a meeting spot. In contrast to official meetings, Stammtischs are casual gatherings. See Sophie Allen, "Stammtisch: Creating Connections and Confidence," *Department of Languages, Cultures and Film, University of Liverpool*, May 21, 2024, https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/languages-cultures-and-film/blog/blog-2024/stammtisch/, accessed August 24, 2024.

[70] Gregory Weeks, "Book Review: The Journalists of the Café Louvre. Plot and Counterplot in Central Europe, by Michael W. Fodor and John Gunther; Inside Europe, by John Gunther; Inside: The Biography of John Gunther, by Ken Cuthebertson," *The Vienna Review* (April 2012), https://www.theviennareview.at/archives/2012/cafe–louvre–a–centre–for–journalists–in–1930s–vienna, accessed August 24, 2024.

[71] Durning, "Vienna's Café Louvre in the 1920s & 1930s."

[72] See Idem, "South of Hitler by M.W. Fodor: A Review Essay," *Eclectic (at Best),* 20 September 2012 https://www.eclecticatbest.com/2012/09/south-of-hitler-by-mw-fodor-review-essay.html, accessed August 24, 2024; *Marcel W. Fodor, Foreign Correspondent*,

Martha Roob, both Hungarian natives. Opposite the Central Telegraph & Telephone Office, Café Louvre stood on Alexander Street.[73] Most of them would also meet at the Athénée Palace Bar. With the Anschluss, the annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany on March 12, 1938, Robert Best progressively succumbed to Nazism and his employment with United Press was concluded in 1941.[74] Deborah Cohen stated that John Gunther and M. W. Fodor would occupy the back booth throughout the afternoons. Most of the Café Louvre's frequent guests at that period were Americans. A decade ago, they were regarded as devoid of expertise in the international arena. By 1930, however, they represented most foreign correspondents in all important European and Asian cities.[75]

According to Cohen, Café Louvre was spacious and dilapidated, with booths covered in a "striped tapestry fabric" worn out by years of heavy use. In addition, there were the informants who, in exchange for a small sum of money, would provide you information on the political machinations inside the Romanian palace or a judge heavily influenced by corruption in Budapest. As Dorothy Thompson noted, it was like being immersed in a "detective novel": every individual who provided information had a hidden agenda, and it was the reporter's responsibility to decipher its true nature.[76] At Café Louvre, the conversation revolved around "secret negotiations," encompassing fanciful and realistic scenarios. Throughout the night, the correspondents engaged in conversation and

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Scribd, 2011 https://www.scribd.com/document/65502558/Marcel-W-Fodor-Foreign-Correspondent, accessed April 15, 2024. See for the Balkanized images of Bucharest: Marcel W. Fodor, *South of Hitler. A new and enlarged edition of Plot & Counterplot in Central Europe* (1937), Introduction by John Gunther (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1939), 59–60.

[73] From 1919 to the Anschluss in 1938, M.W. Fodor covered international affairs in Vienna for the *Manchester Guardian*. The *Philadelphia Public Ledger* and the *New York Evening Post* were among the several American periodicals for which he contributed.

[74] Durning, "Vienna's Café Louvre in the 1920s & 1930s."

[75] Cohen, *Last Call at the Hotel Imperial*, 127.

[76] Ibid.

consumed beverages until the fatigued servers at the café lowered the iron shutters covering the windows. Excessive knowledge of immoral conduct in the world and the subsequent effort to drown it with drink was a "professional vice."

In his book *Inside Europe*, Gunther's viewpoint was derived from observations of the "eyewitness," who meticulously documented several meetings, "distilling thousands of nights of conversation" at renowned venues like the Café Louvre or the Hotel Adlon.[77] In his 1935 article "Dateline Vienna," published in *Harper's Magazine*, Gunther characterized the Viennese café as the "inner soul of Vienna," the quintessential display of the town's essence and a space where, apart from coffee, one could find literature, dialogue, and tranquility of the soul and mind. The author advised foreign journalists to visit specific locales, such as the Café Imperial in the morning and the humbler Café Louvre in the afternoon, at the Stammtisch, where they would discover "Viennese-brand" journalism.[78] As part of their daily ritual, a typical group of foreign correspondents, authorities, businesspeople, and the "two or three tipsters and hangers-on" convened informally to gossip, peruse newspapers, have coffee, and debate current issues.[79]

Seeing newspaper articles without charge provided them with a significant benefit. The Imperial Café received around "20 Viennese and between 40 and 50 foreign papers," carefully displayed on rattan frameworks and stored in a large cabinet overseen by a dedicated waiter. Gunther's depiction of contemporary journalism finally culminated in an appeal to camaraderie and global connection among journalists, as he declared that "the basis of journalism in Europe is friendship." It was

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[77] Ibid, 128, 172, 227.

[78] John Gunther, "Dateline Vienna," *Harper's Magazine*, July 1935, (198–208) 201–2, https://harpers.org/archive/1935/07/dateline–vienna/, accessed June 19, 2024.

[79] Ibid, 202.

insufficient to peruse newspapers or cultivate amicable relationships with the official press department. An exceptional foreign correspondent had "friends." From Gunther's perspective, it was essential for informants to be readily accessible, whether it was over the phone or at the Stammtisch, to promptly provide the journalist with information on reports, elucidate the context of events, analyze emerging trends, and introduce him to new acquaintances. "News gathering in Europe is largely a collaboration whereby men who know and trust one other exchange gossip, background, and information," he concluded.[80]

For Gunther, relationships and confidence had significant drawbacks under an authoritarian order. Several of those contacts who previously congregated in cafés would then face expulsion from Germany and Austria, incarceration in jails or concentration camps, or concealment in remote locations due to fear of law enforcement. The state distrusted American correspondents in Berlin and Vienna due to their assistance to "various Jews, socialists, liberals, pacifists, democrats when Hitler took power," who were providing them with intelligence in exchange. Being exposed to acquaintances embroiled in political disfavor was a perilous experience for an American journalist. In his opinion, it could lead to significant consequences for the friends. Their concern was to avoid being seen in a foreign company, especially with a foreign journalist. For Gunther, among the "cardinal evils of dictatorship" was that it "spoils a fine human relationship, the mutual trust of people who formerly got professional help as well as pleasure from one another's company."[81]

After working in the Vienna offices of the *Chicago Daily News* from 1924 until 1935, John Gunther headed on a voyage around Eastern Europe, including Romania. During his time in Bucharest, he saw a comparable decrease in the initial cultural and social importance of the cafés in the

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[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid.

latter part of the 1930s, under the repressive governance of the far-right regime, as he had earlier shown in his book *Inside Europe*. Hence, in a hotel café near the Royal Palace, a pair of youthful men, identified as members of the Iron Guard, were casually attired and proficient in many languages while they enjoyed Turkish coffee and engaged in conversations on revolution. Subsequently, the author included details on the historical background of the Iron Guard to communicate the foreboding ambiance of the café. Gunther noted that the group was established in 1927 by a "young zealot," Corneliu Codreanu, who was of Polish descent rather than Rumanian ethnicity and whose actual name was "Zelinski." Further elaborating on the group, he clarified that originally, Codreanu referred to it as the "Legion of the Archangel Michael." The author criticized the organization for its platform characterized as "a fanatic, obstreperous sub-Fascism on a strong nationalist and anti-Semitic basis."[82]

Romanian nationalism grew stronger after World War I and peaked during Gunther's visit. According to Maria Bucur, this change started with language and culture and developed into national-socialist nationalism. Racism has always been present in Romania, and xenophobic language was often encouraged or even enforced before it became ideologically popular.[83]

By 1940, Gunther observed how Legion members marched through rural areas, donned white attire, carried burning crosses, made impressions on the uninformed peasants, and incited students in several metropolises.[84] Bucharest and Romania are being examined for their portrayal in media designed to captivate American audiences by emphasizing the country's purported distinctiveness and Balkan traits.

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[82] Idem, *Inside Europe* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1940), 446.

[83] Maria Bucur, "Romania," in *Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe, 1919–45*, ed. Kevin Passmore (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), (57–78) 61–63.

[84] John Gunther, *Inside Europe*, 446.

In the Capital of Intrigue

Contrary to the widespread perception that the American media disregarded Romania, besides the high-standard press represented by the professional correspondents mentioned in the present study, the country had coverage in several local mundane newspapers during the 1920s and 1930s. This attention was drawn by Romania's so-called Balkan drama, unique foreign flavor, and intriguing appeal. The advantages or drawbacks of such (mis)representations in the context of Romanian-American culture and identity negotiations are subject to debate. However, the American public recognized Romania's significance in the pre-war tumultuous years in its European context. The people, their history, current events, and similar literature create a dynamic and diverse backdrop owing to the inherently flexible interpretation implied by signs and texts.[85] Indeed, visual culture prioritizes an image or narrative's historical and cultural context over its presentation. Bourdieu's concept of "habitus" (the perceiver's context) influences the interpretation of texts based on individual preferences, requiring considering firsthand experiences, especially with impartiality claims.[86]

Romania's reputation overseas was distorted due to oversimplification, over-generalization, or, in other words, by being associated with the negative connotations of Balkanization. Regarding our topic, a survey of approximately 110 American interwar local newspapers revealed that most were primarily concerned with reporting on the scandals and rumors surrounding the royal family and the establishments in Bucharest, such as hotels, restaurants, pubs, and cafés. Out of these favored locations, the press was mainly focused on the Athénée Palace bar, believed to be a gathering place for foreign spies and criminals. It served as the

[85] Tony Schirato and Jen Webb, *Understanding the Visual* (London and Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2004), 7–9.

[86] Ibid, 5–6.

backdrop for a renowned detective story penned by Viola Brothers Shore, a multifaceted American author, screenwriter, dramatist, and poet involved in Broadway productions. The mystery novel *Murder on the Glass Floor* (1932) was also serialized in the *Daily News* (1932). Despite the crime scene being the glass floor of the SS "Albania," the fate of those who witnessed the tragedy would be intertwined with the Athénée Palace hotel and bar. The hotel was also described as the "capital of intrigue" by an anonymous reporter in a 1939 article published in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*:

> Newspapermen from all over the world gather there to mix with Japanese diplomats and Polish refugees and German secret service men and all the other people who seldom are what they profess to be. Rumors, born in the bar, seethe out through the lobby and spread through the city's outskirts.[87]

It was also American correspondent Edward W. Beattie's specialty and obsession during his visit to Bucharest. He signed numerous articles in local and central American newspapers and dedicated sections to this subject in his volume of reports. In a 1939 American provincial gazette entitled the *Corvallis Gazette-Times*, the bar at the Athénée Palace was the meeting place of an exotic "Balkan Mata Hari," presumably the famous Frau Edith von Kohler, and countless spies disguised in "commercial travelers." At that moment, in that "Babel of languages," there were more than a dozen nationalities among the drinkers at the bar, most of them journalists, "military and diplomatic geniuses," who would "profess to know nothing about Balkan politics and have nobody to spy upon," but "always with an eye on the German newspapermen." All news was "wild rumor," as Americans would call them.[88] Beattie's articles and several variations on the theme were multiplied in dozens of newspapers under captivating titles like "Spies, Diplomats, Journalists Rub Elbows in Bucharest

[87] "Keys to Intriguing Mystery," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 31, 1939, 82.

[88] Edward W. Beattie, "Bucharest Bars Now Crossroads of European Political Intrigue," *Corvallis Gazette–Times*, Corvallis, September 30, 1939, 1–2.

Bar" (*The Daily News – Times*, 1939[89]), "Intrigue and Beer Link Arms in Bucharest Hotel Bar" *(Omaha World-Herald,* 1939; *Evening World-Herald*, 1939[90]), "Spy Talk Heard at Bucharest" (*Sapulpa Herald,* 1939[91]), "Bucharest Bar Alive with European Spies" (*The Capital Journal*, 1939[92]), "Hotel Bar Is Busy Nest of War Talkers" (*The Daily Chronicle*, 1939[93]), "Bar Revealed As Center of Espionage" (*Los Angeles Evening Citizen News,* 1939[94]), "Bucharest Hotel Bar a Rumor Beehive" (*Portland Press Herald,* 1939[95]), "News Mostly Gossip Around Rumanian Bar" (*The Kokomo Tribune*, 1939[96]), "Bucharest Bar Intrigue Center, Pseudo Diplomats Kept Busy" (*The Tennessean*, 1939[97]), "Mysterious People Busy with Balkan 'Intrigue'" (*The Washington Daily News,* 1939[98]), to cite only a selection of the multitude of titles on the subject published on 30 September, 1939. Some were provincial newspapers, but they were spread all over the United States and were quite capable of inciting public opinion. And most of all, such sensationalist articles sold well. Edward W. Beattie, a prominent American foreign journalist for the *United Press* during the 1930s and 1940s, characterized

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89 Idem, "Spies, Diplomats, Journalists Rub Elbows in Bucharest Bar," *The Daily News – Times*, Neenah–Menasha, September 30, 1939, 1.

90 Idem, "Intrigue and Beer Link Arms in Bucharest Hotel Bar," *Omaha World–Herald,* Omaha, NE, September 30, 1939, 3; *Evening World–Herald,* Omaha, September 30, 1939, 2.

91 Idem, "Spy Talk Heard at Bucharest," *Sapulpa Herald*, Sapulpa, September 30, 1939, 1.

92 Idem, "Bucharest Bar Alive with European Spies," *The Capital Journal*, Pierre, September 30, 1939, 1.

93 Idem, "Hotel Bar Is Busy Nest of War Talkers," *The Daily Chronicle,* Washington, September 30, 1939, 1.

94 Idem, "Bar Revealed as Center of Espionage," *Los Angeles Evening Citizen News*, Los Angeles, September 30, 1939, 2.

95 Idem, "Bucharest Hotel Bar a Rumor Beehive," *Portland Press Herald*, South Portland, September 30, 1939, 2.

96 Idem, "News Mostly Gossip Around Rumanian Bar," *The Kokomo Tribune*, Kokomo, September 30, 1939, 2.

97 Idem, "Bucharest Bar Intrigue Center, Pseudo Diplomats Kept Busy," *The Tennessean*, Nashville, September 30, 1939, 3.

98 Idem, "Mysterious People Busy with Balkan 'Intrigue'," *The Washington Daily News*, Washington, 30 September 1939, 3.

the Athénée Palace Bar in many American local newspapers as a Balkan setting for burlesque drama.

Beattie also provided carefully documented reports throughout his time in Romania. His command of the German language facilitated his assignment to the Berlin bureau in 1932, where he distinguished himself as one of the early journalists alerting the world to the looming threat posed by Adolf Hitler's ascent to power. From 1935 to 1936, he delivered comprehensive reporting from Ethiopia during the Italian invasion and subsequent occupation. Following the German invasion of Poland in 1939, which marked the beginning of World War II, he served as a journalist in Warsaw. Beattie was sent to London as a war journalist, where he meticulously documented the intense bombing and provided coverage of General George Patton's 3rd Army's progress into Germany and Austria in 1944. Beattie and Wright Bryan from the *Atlanta Journal* believed they had deceived the adversary but were nevertheless captured by the Germans during the winter of 1944. They were detained as captured prisoners of war for eight months. He was employed in the Washington and New York offices of *United Press* and, after 1947, was hired temporarily by the newly-formed CIA.[99]

During the fall of 1939, he journeyed from Poland to Romania in the company of Richard Mowrer. In the spring of 1940, he made a second trip to Romania, assuming the role of a United Press war reporter, starting from the London headquarters and connecting via Paris. In his book *Freely to Pass*, he detailed the events in Bucharest.[100] Excerpts from Beattie's writings about the iconic Athénée Palace bar in the American press may be found among its pages.

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[99] See "Edward W. Beattie, foreign and war correspondent for United Press in the 1930s and 1940s," UPI (United Press International) Archives, April 27, 1984 https://www.upi.com/Archives/1984/04/27/Edward-W-Beattie-foreign-and-war-correspondent-for-United/1098451890000/, accessed August 24, 2024.

[100] Beattie, *Freely to Pass* (New York and Boston: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1942).

In September 1939, Beattie discovered that Bucharest's picturesque atmosphere was destroyed, revealing the underlying disorder that the Nazi advance guard was deliberately generating. The Nazis designated the Athénée Palace hotel as their primary headquarters. Many "foreign diplomats, British agents, newspaper correspondents, arms salesmen and con-men of all persuasions" were crammed together on five stories in complete disarray. The illustration of the "two great attractions" of the Athénée Palace, including its bar, indicated Beattie's preoccupation with its spies' nest. He regarded it as the most enjoyable hotel east of Vienna and recalled that almost everyone spied on nearly everyone else. "This was a source of awed fascination for the few simple souls who had nobody to shadow at all," he concluded.[101]

His passionate involvement in the clandestine agents and plots publicly deliberated at the Athénée Palace hotel, notably in the lobby and bar, replicates Countess Waldeck's detective stories focused on the hotel's customers and atmosphere.[102] In Beattie's version,

> The bar was a sort of continuous performance farce, with a constantly changing cast which somehow never changed its character. There were always a couple of earnest Germans at the bar, who ate plate after plate of potato chips with their beer. Usually there were a couple of men in gray flannels who ordered double gin and tonic. One of them was a long man who looked like a Texan, and who, according to popular legend, oversaw the sabotage of the Iron Gate, where the Danube pours out of the hills onto the Rumanian plain, and the channel could be easily blocked. There was always a table or two of Englishmen, perhaps one of Frenchmen, and a few Germans. Everyone eavesdropped. It got almost embarrassing for the Americans, who had no one after whom they could legitimately skulk. There were always a couple of gentlemen who had black-market connections, and pockets full of thousand-lei notes; unfortunately, the rate was low, because the headquarters of the black market turned out to

[101] Ibid, 172.

[102] Rosie G. Waldeck, *Athene Palace Bucharest. Hitler's "New Order" Comes to Rumania* (London: Constable, 1943).

> have been Cernauti, after all. There was usually a large hulking Rumanian who was 'about' to get a diplomatic post abroad; his program of the moment seemed to provide for nothing beyond periodic reconnaissance trips into the bar, and a series of long, mysterious conversations with a series of dark, furtive individuals, behind a certain fake marble pillar in the lounge.[103]

Within this "Balkan" surroundings, some tables were filled by the Romanian official delegates of the State Propaganda, Censorship, and Security, universally acknowledged figures. Notwithstanding their watchful observation, the American journalists, notably Beattie's colleagues Sam Brewer from the *Chicago Tribune*, Sonia Tomara from the *New York Herald Tribune*, and Walter Duranty from the *New York Times*, continued to tune in to the BBC and other international radio stations, including those from Germany. Hence, they acquired information on the progress of the German military and the actual danger, which had been hidden by Beattie's accounts inside the light-hearted atmosphere of the hotel.[104] Once aware of the degree of risk and chaos in the vicinity, it was crucial to handle Bucharest's crisis with the highest level of seriousness while refraining from panic and adopting an attitude of natural cynicism and humor. As the war advanced, the innate camaraderie and loyalty between journalists would be challenged by the oppressive ambiance and profound understanding of danger in the Athénée Palace bar and lobby.

In November 1939, Robert St. John traveled through France and eventually arrived in Bucharest, making a final stop in Budapest in September of the same year before continuing into Romania. Like Robert Parker or Henry T. Gorrell, he first became familiar with the café referred to as Café Angly or Hangly, as they misspelled Café Anglais, in Budapest. There was still a laid-back ambiance there. The presence of spies was pervasive, like at the Athénée Palace. The foreign press delegates headed

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[103] Beattie, *Freely to Pass*, 174.
[104] Ibid, 235.

to the "Hángli café" in Budapest daily in the late afternoon. At regular intervals, an ensemble of forty or fifty individuals would convene. St John observed that although there was much speculation and discussion, along with some story flipping, it was ultimately a futile use of journalistic time. He derived pleasure from seeing countless intelligent young people exerting significant effort to acquire knowledge from numerous other bright young individuals, all equally resolute in their pursuit of maximizing their learning while maintaining complete secrecy. The friendly interactions among journalists disappeared when a man named Fritz Ludwig, an informant, started frequenting the café. Addressing St. John, he introduced himself as Ludwig. "Used to be with AP myself. I know all about you. Glad to see you. Have a beer?" However, Ludwig abandoned his acting when the Nazis ceased to engage in pretenses on the Balkan Peninsula. Ultimately, he established his residence in a lavish property situated on a hill in Buda and drove a vehicle with a swastika flag attached to the front screen. Press reports said that he held the position of Hungary's Gestapo head.[105]

At the Athénée Palace in Bucharest, the situation was not notably different. Typically, it housed a minimum of fifty reporters at any one moment. They came and left, scouring the Balkans in search of news, always striving to synchronize their moves with the next coup d'état, upheaval, bombarding, unanticipated declaration of war, sabotage action, or Nazi invasion.

As to St John's account, Goldie Horowitz was recognized as a prominent spy at the Athénée Palace Bar. Her international tasks included Rome, London, Paris, Moscow, Berlin, Beirut, Sydney, and Beijing. Moreover, she had undergone many marriages and divorces and had engaged in extensive machinations, whether by direct or indirect methods. At the

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[105] St. John, *Foreign Correspondent*, 54–55.

beginning of 1940, she arrived in Bucharest. Soon after coming into prominence in Romania, she quickly became the most influential lady in the capital city when the Nazi generals and field marshals took up their abode in the Athénée Palace.[106]

The collaborator of St John, Robert Parker, who was chief at the *Associated Press* Budapest headquarters, frequently traveled to Bucharest at that period. He surveyed the lobby and bar of the Athénée Palace and likened it to a typical Balkan lodge. Indeed, according to him, the white stone edifice had a more significant amount of genuine melodrama than what was ever envisioned in Hollywood. Surveillance and conspiracy were pervasive:

> Take a walk around the lobby, Parker continued […]. See that little bearded man reading a Greek newspaper in the corner? He looks like an Athens tobacco merchant. He's a member of British Intelligence. This dark-eyed, pretty little woman sitting at the bar, surrounded by half a dozen admiring young men, wears an ermine coat and dazzling gowns from an apparently inexhaustible wardrobe. She has been here a week. Tomorrow she will vanish. Her name on the hotel register means nothing. But she will report to the Deuxiéme Bureau in Paris.[107]

British historian and novelist Richard Collier[108] stated that between 1939 and 1940, the Athénée Palace Hotel was a safe and comfortable refuge for American journalists covering the war in Europe.[109] Irrespective of

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[106] Ibid, 101.

[107] Robert Parker, *Headquarters Budapest* (New York and Toronto: Farrar & Reinhart, 1944), 70.

[108] Richard Collier was born in London. He enlisted in the Royal Air Force (RAF) in 1942 and later assumed the role of War Associate Editor for Lord Mountbatten's Phoenix Magazine for the Forces. Following the conclusion of the war, he became a feature writer for the Daily Mail. Collier authored more than fifteen books, some of which were influenced by his own activities as an airplane pilot during World War II. See "Richard Collier. Historian and novelist. 1924–1996," *Curtis Brown*, December 8, 2021, https://www.curtisbrown.co.uk/client/richard-collier, accessed August 12, 2024.

[109] Idem, *Fighting Words: the War Correspondents of World War Two* (New York: St. Martin's, 1989), 8. While Collier's book focuses only on British and American journalists, it is

the hotel or city, a consistent group of correspondents prominently occupied the main spotlight. The "suave" Cedric Salter, a sophisticated journalist from the *Daily Mail*, was often accompanied by his loyal and aged sheepdog and his beautiful blonde fiancée, Nelly Ciorascu. Terence Atherton, a "red-headed Irishman," was another reliable member of the *Daily Mail* team. He was highly fluent in Serbo-Croat. David Walker, "broad-shouldered and bullet-headed," would often be present, skillfully managing his responsibilities as a correspondent for the *London Daily Mirror*, a standby for *Reuters*, and an operative for British intelligence. The "redoubtable" Clare Hollingworth, a competent journalist working for the *Daily Express*, traveled extensively between cities. She was committed to "sleep on the floor once a week to harden herself for the field." She took pride in her ability to 'strip and reassemble a machine gun as fast as any man." The "wooden legged" Walter Duranty, who had and at that time served as *the New York Times* correspondent in the Balkans, was frequently present in Bucharest. He would entice others to join him for what he referred to as a "whore's breakfast" at his preferred establishment, Fănică Luca, where they would indulge in caviar and champagne.[110] To become part of this esteemed group, at least two journalists had experienced genuine adversity. Ray Brock, "the hefty and courageous young Texan," usually followed by his "wire-haired fox terrier Slatko" and his" long-suffering wife Mary," finally became the *New York Times* correspondent in Belgrade. However, for nine months, all three members of the Brock family had been living in poverty, relying on any available source of funding to cover their basic accommodation expenses.

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still a commendably thorough investigation of WW II war reporters and their professional activities. Most of them are famous correspondents: Ernie Pyle, Quentin Reynolds, Martha Gellhorn (referred to as Mrs. Ernest Hemingway during the war), and photographers Margaret Bourke-White and Robert Capa.

110 Ibid, 51.

Similarly, Robert St John and his wife Eda, who actively pursued war in five countries, spent most of their time standing in train corridors.[111] The war correspondents, known as "warcos," were accommodated in the Hotel Athénée Palace, "a white blue-shuttered pile approached across a vast expanse of asphalt, flanked in summer by blood-red gladioli." The main lobby had walls adorned with "rust-colored marble" and "narrow gold-framed mirrors." "Heavy marble pillars" and comfortable sofas complemented these mirrors in a rich raspberry hue. David Walker informed his employers that the lobby was filled with spies, including Edith von Koehler, a "plump and dressy blonde," who astonishingly pretended to be the "Agricultural Correspondent for the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*." Suspected to be a spy herself, American correspondent and photographer Margaret Bourke-White, "a red-haired Valkyrie," was constantly accompanied by" the Prefect of Police, a Propaganda Ministry official, an army officer, and the city architect" due to the elevated level of security on her photographic assignment for *Life*.[112]

Based on the correspondents' accounts, namely those by Robert Parker and Robert St. John, Collier mentioned that numerous intricate codes were devised to evade censors and "telephone-tappers" equally. Therefore, inside the clandestine lexicon of AP, whose head office was in Budapest, Hitler was referred to as "Oscar," Mussolini was referred to as "Armstrong," King Carol was referred to as "The Boy Scout" because of his fervent dedication to creating their uniforms, and his lover, the red-haired Magda Lupescu, was nicknamed "Glamour Girl." Shortly before midnight on June 26th, the telephone rang in Robert Parker's Budapest office. The caller on the phone was St. John from Bucharest. "'Here it is,' he shouted

[111] Ibid, 51–52.
[112] Ibid, 54.

enthusiastically, 'Uncle Joe has sent the Boy Scout a letter about Bessie.'" Then he hung up.[113]

In the late 1930s, the Athénée Palace bar was no longer acknowledged as a unique European public place since its cultural and social significance was influenced by the increasing conflict between the intruders and the sufferers. Similar conditions prevailed at cafés, taverns, and diners in Budapest, Vienna, and Paris. Consequently, the adversary's presence in the Athénée Palace bar suppressed the passionate debates among foreign correspondents. Dr. Wohlthat and his staff were renowned for their extended stays at the bar, consistently indulging in "drinking champagne cocktails."[114] Helmuth C. H. Wohlthat, an influential businessman and official figure in Nazi Germany, orchestrated several of the highest-level diplomacy and commercial agreements before and during World War II. From 1938 onwards, he served as Hermann Göring's core advisor in the Four-Year Plan organization.

Across from Wohlthat, Parker reported sat half a dozen French and English newspaper journalists. They knew that, through some freak of acoustics, whispers could be heard quite plainly at the far ends of the room. But so did Hitler's traveling salesman. Wohlthat discussed nothing but the weather and the Bucharest night-club girls, grinning broadly in the direction of the disappointed eavesdroppers."[115]

Little remained from the American parodic depiction of the Athénée Palace bar as a Balkan vaudeville setting, which was then transformed into a tragedy. Concerning rumors or informal agents supplanted formal debates and negotiations.

> Bucharest was frightened. The newspapers printed nothing, on orders of the censor. The radio did not mention Germany or Dr. Wohlthat. But the

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[113] Ibid.

[114] Parker, *Headquarters Budapest*, 67, 70.

[115] Ibid.

> Bucharest grapevine worked well. Groups of Rumanians gathered on street corners for excited discussion. The lobby of the Athénée Palace buzzed with gossip, despite the printed card on each table: 'According to the government, political discussion is forbidden'. Rumanians had watched Hitler work since 1933.[116]

The American mildly satirical representations of the Athénée Palace bar as a Balkan vaudeville venue evolved into a sad historical scene, leaving little trace of its original content.

Conclusion

The primary objective of this chapter was to examine the novel symbolism that surfaced in European cafés over the interwar decades. More precisely, it examined the transformation of these locations from vibrant and inclusive social environments to isolated and conflicting places under emerging power politics. Deliberations in literature and the arts, along with fervent political discourse, would yield conflicts, theatrical impact, and encrypted transmission of information. Coffee shops, often known as cafés, emerged as vehicles of modernization in heterotopic, open-border environments where private and public spheres intersected. The research examined American war journalists, who were relatively obscure to the Romanian population but were influential worldwide figures who contributed substantially to the portrayal of Romania in the European setting during World War II.

[116] Ibid, 71.

Final Remarks

Trailblazers of the Press delved into the often-overlooked experiences of American war correspondents in interwar Romania. It showcased their rich cultural exchanges and revealed how these interactions significantly shaped the narratives of that historical period. This investigation into American war correspondents during the interwar period in Romania uncovers a complex array of experiences and stories. Negotiations bridge communication gaps across ethnic, cultural, social, and political divides, uniting individuals and entities under a shared commitment to a better future. This investigation developed a framework for understanding the interactions and exchanges between Romania and the United States, which can be significant for current relations since 1989. The book explored complex interactions during the interwar period and introduced the concept of identity negotiations, emphasizing self-representation and cultural dialogue. It highlighted the vital role of American foreign correspondents in interwar Romania, providing valuable insights into the country's historical, political, and cultural context.

Beginning with the inaugural generation of correspondents who ventured into the fray during World War I and extended their endeavors into the early 1930s, these journalists provided a distinctive viewpoint that profoundly influenced their comprehension of the region. Through their reporting, they explored the complex identity negotiations in Transylvania, offering a glimpse into the vestiges of the old order within a swiftly evolving environment. The foreign correspondents occupied unique spaces, including hotels that attracted journalists from diverse global backgrounds and political ideologies. These venues functioned as centers for conversation and engagement, fostering a feeling of

estrangement in their context. Significantly, female correspondents carved out their niche within a predominantly male sphere, frequently interpreting the wartime atmosphere through the lens of the Athénée Palace in Romania's capital, Bucharest. Moving beyond politics and conflict, these correspondents engaged in enjoyable discussions about food and flavors, demonstrating how communal meals can bridge divides and create friendships. They participated in the cultural tradition of sharing news over coffee, promoting exchanging ideas and facilitating global communication during turbulent times. Through their efforts and insights, American war correspondents significantly influenced the narrative surrounding interwar Romania.

American journalists consistently portrayed Romania through the lens of the two World Wars. The country's significance stemmed from its geopolitical, diplomatic, and socioeconomic roles within the new landscape of international influence, where the USA had various strategic interests. The key takeaway is that Romania was presented to Americans as a European nation, making considerable efforts to integrate into modern world politics. The comprehensive archive of American war records, which includes references to Romania, demonstrates the increasing stability of American-Romanian relations. Analyzing the cultural and identity negotiations between the two countries during the interwar period and World War II highlights the significant influence of American journalists in Romania. It is essential to highlight the limited availability of documented resources for exploring cross-cultural imagology from 1939 to 1941. Beyond Ernest H. Latham's research, the understanding of American correspondents who journeyed to interwar Romania in the prelude to World War II to report significant historical occurrences remains scarce. The diaries and published collections of articles are invaluable resources for researchers in various fields, such as history, foreign policy, diplomacy, warfare strategy, imagology, comparative literature, social studies, cultural

studies, identity studies, and travel studies. These works specifically highlight the dynamics of Romanian-American relations.

Trailblazers of the Press began by exploring how American war correspondents portrayed Romania from 1916 to the early 1930s. Two distinctive groups of American journalists traveled to Romania during the 20th century. This section focused on the pioneering reporters from the World War I era, with particular attention to those who came from Russia and observed the unfolding of the Bolshevik Revolution.

The book then delved into the multifaceted relationship between Romania and America, examining the nuanced process of identity negotiation among those who lived through the events and those who analyzed them. A particular segment of the book delves into the encounters of American correspondents in Transylvania, a region that profoundly captivated their imaginations. American journalists meticulously chronicled pivotal events from the interwar and wartime eras and the individuals they met throughout their journeys. The findings highlight the relationship between American representations and Transylvania's identity patterns. This exploration emphasizes the region's rich cosmopolitan nature, showcasing the defining characteristics of Romanian individuals and the diverse minority groups and their intricate interactions. This was followed by an exploration of the complexities involved in identity negotiations and communication between American reporters and the residents of Transylvania. Additionally, it examined the interactions among different communities within this multiethnic region during the tumultuous war period.

Among the many American journalists who visited interwar Romania, one chapter highlighted Robert St. John's journey in both his professional and personal life. He sought to build confidence, cultivate wisdom, gain knowledge, and develop tolerance. His insights reflected his exceptional journalism skills, a strong spirit, and unwavering resolve. He secured a

position with *The Associated Press*, a distinguished American news organization that played a pivotal role in shaping events during World War II. As a reporter during the interwar period in Romania, he observed noteworthy events, notably the earthquake of November 1940 and the Pogrom against the Jews in January 1941. Being moved by the significance of these events, he reported on the disasters to American publications. His narratives enriched his peers' narratives, including Countess Waldeck, Ray Brock, David Walker, Leigh White, Henry Stokes, Cedric Salter, Leo Sulzberger, and Robert Parker.

Trailblazers of the Press then examined the changing characteristics of heterotopian settings by tracing the journeys of American war correspondents between various media offices. They connected the Grand Hotels of Western Europe – specifically Vienna, Paris, Rome, Madrid, and Berlin – with Bucharest's Athénée Palace. This hotel was on the verge of embracing its cosmopolitan identity until the outbreak of war in Bucharest on November 23, 1940, when Romania joined the Axis forces. The event resulted in severing diplomatic relations between Romania and the United States on December 12, 1941, when Romania officially declared war on the United States. As a result, the decreasing number of journalists sought refuge in alternative locations.

In a media landscape dominated by male perspectives, brave American women journalists worked to reveal the harsh truths of conflict through their reporting. This collection highlights these correspondents who traveled to Romania during the chaotic pre-war and wartime periods. Their courage and professionalism earned them recognition, and they all stayed at the Athénée Palace Hotel, a key hub for the American press reminiscent of Hotel Imperial.

Finally, the book explored how American correspondents portrayed Romanian culinary traditions and artistry during Europe's pre-war and wartime periods, specifically from 1939 to 1941. Romania garnered

significant interest as preparations for the impending conflict began, and establishing a stable environment became crucial. The investigation highlighted the importance of sustenance, detailing its essential elements, methods of preparation, consumption, and communal appreciation within the upscale dining establishments of Bucharest. The act of preparing and sharing food in public spaces emerged as a cultural dialogue between the United States and Romania. However, as conflict arose, the significance of menus and the enjoyment of flavors in social interactions began to wane. The social landscape was marked by considerable diversity, as patrons were often defined by cultural, political, economic, and professional distinctions. The existing circumstances reflected the unease and tension associated with discord.

Trailblazers of the Press analyzed the innovative symbolism that emerged in European cafés during the interwar period. It specifically analyzed the metamorphosis of these locales from dynamic and inclusive social settings to segregated and contentious areas due to evolving power dynamics. Discussions in literature, the arts, and politics often led to disputes and veiled communication. Coffee shops, or cafés, became symbols of modernity in areas where private and public spaces intersected. Trailblazers of the Press highlighted the role of American war correspondents, who significantly influenced the United States' representation in Europe during World War II, even though they remain largely unknown in Romania.

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Trailblazers of the Press explores a topic often neglected in Romania's historical narrative. It highlights the crucial role of American journalists in documenting social, cultural, and historical events in Romania during World War II within a European context. It provides a comprehensive understanding of the Romanian people's cultural and social aspects by offering valuable historical, military, and diplomatic insights.

"This book challenges the accepted belief regarding the irrelevant influence of the United States in interwar Romania, providing significant knowledge for a detailed analysis of the way America portrayed Romania. The book aims to remedy the information deficiencies about foreign war correspondence, diaries, and accounts of those who visited or lived for a time in interwar Romania, proving the special American interest in this cultural and identity space."

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